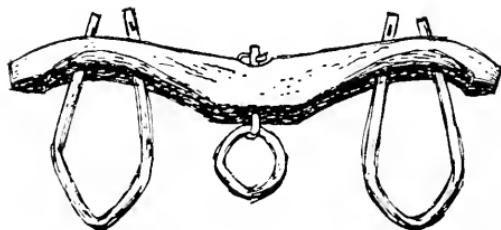




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Dear Mr. & Mrs. —  
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Dear Mr. & Mrs. —  
I am delighted  
to assure you



# LINCOLN

IN THE

# BLACK HAWK WAR

An Epos of the Northwest

BY

THEOPHILUS MIDDLING



ST. LOUIS, MO.,  
SIGMA PUBLISHING CO

(For Sale by A. C. McClurg & Co., Booksellers, Chicago, Ills.)



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## Canto First.

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*CAPTAIN ABRAHAM LINCOLN.*

### I.

Sunshiny little April showers  
Would whirl from Heaven's cloudy towers,  
A slanting coverlet of rain  
Down on the grassy bed of plain,  
Which seemed each water-drop to flatter  
And answer with a kiss the patter;  
Afar the feathery greenery  
Filled full of love the scenery,  
Which in the longing heart would stir  
Sweet fancy to a tender whirr.  
Then Spring would prime her watering pot  
Up in the skies where every dot  
Of fog she gathered to her store,  
When she again began to pour

Her glossy globules in long lines down dash-ing,  
And on the face of the pedestrian splashing.  
Thus intermittent vernal showers  
Kept playing up and down the hours,  
Building the day of cloud and sheen,  
With rainbows arching them between,  
On which the troubled human sight  
Could glance its way from dark to bright.  
The muffled trumpeter on high  
Whose peal is thunder out the sky  
Would downward hurl his sudden blast—  
Of earth it seemed the very last,  
As if he tried on his trump to play  
The signal of the judgment day.

Now through this elemental war  
Resounding o'er him from afar,  
Young Abraham Lincoln you may see  
Walking alone, unstrung his form,  
Thinking about what is to be,  
Unmindful of the shine or storm.  
He dreams, too, of New Salem, whence he  
hails,  
Where he has quit his splitting rails,  
Has flung down axe and wedge and maul,  
For he has heard another call—  
Where, too, he is a candidate  
To be lawgiver to the State,  
And where runs singing Sangamon

Which he in soul oft floats upon.  
Thither he will be soon returning  
When the war-cloud passes over,  
It is the very heart of all his yearning,  
For Lincoln, too, is lover;  
Awake, adream, he cannot help but render  
Unto that town and stream a service tender.

But now he moves the other way,  
Although not very long may be his stay;  
He goes the proclamation to obey,  
In which the Governor demands,  
Some troops to quell the Indian bands  
Of Black Hawk in their fiercee foray,  
Whose bloody hope dares all whites slay  
And blooming farms in ashes lay.  
So Lincoln starts on his new path  
To bring to the red slayer seath,  
And yet a deep recoil he hath.  
Noiseless the brooding mist from Heaven fell  
Around him, and a far foreboding spell  
Awoke, and heaved with throbings of his  
heart,  
Which slowly seemed awain to part  
And with itself by turns to talk,  
Wooing the way by misty walk.  
Two souls within him face each other,  
Yet he to both is the one brother.  
At last the cleaving of the cloud  
Bids him let fall his inner shroud,

A little prairie run he fords,  
And there breaks into spoken words:

“My gift has been still to forgive,  
In mercy I my days would live;  
And yet within I feel a strife  
Which stabs me at the source of life;  
My father’s father I can see  
Drop dead beside a giant tree  
Which he was felling in a wood,  
Where he, of harm unconscious, stood;  
The enemy not far away  
Secreted in the bushes lay,  
And treacherous took a deadly aim  
At him from whom I bear my name.  
That bullet, by an Indian shot  
Is shaping now my earthly lot;  
I feel it plowing in my brain,  
And slaying still afresh the slain;  
To-day I am impelled to fight  
By that transmitted bullet’s might  
My father, Thomas Lincoln, stood  
Beside his father gurgling blood,  
A little lad of soft six years  
Shedding his hapless, hopeless tears;  
A tomahawk was whizzing round his head  
When the redskin there reeled over dead,  
Shot by the quick-eyed brother who was  
bigger,  
Who from the near-by cabin pulled the trig-  
ger.

But fatherless became the home  
On the frontier, where wild men roam,  
Ready for any bloody deed  
To sate their vengeance or their greed.  
This story have I often heard  
Told at the fireside, till upstirred  
I felt to retribution of my blood,  
When I grew up a man, and could  
From my own tracks give back the blow  
Dealt at me by the stoutest foe.  
And yet shall I my blood deny?  
Another voice bids me defy  
The surging of the vengeful strains  
Which trickle down ancestral veins,  
And turn to a red battle-field my brains.”

While thus his musings to him spoke,  
At once his weaving fancy broke  
Its fine-spun thread and stopped his talk  
With self; he hardly dared to walk  
Ahead in usual striding gait,  
Although he knew 'twas getting late,  
And the muster might not for him wait.  
Right on his path a cloud throws down  
In wrath a sunless savage frown,  
And stutters doom in clashing claps of thun-  
der  
Which its black bosom tear asunder,  
And overturn the contents all  
Into one woful waterfall

Swirling him in its swashing sheet,  
So that he scarce can keep his feet.  
The forked lightning fiercely stabs  
His eyesight with a dozen jabs,  
And fain would break into his brain  
As if to sear it of a stain,  
Leaving an inward blank of pain  
Which blinds him to the light of day,  
So that he cannot see his way.  
He wondered at the white-hot levin  
Which flung a bolt at him from Heaven,  
And listened in his halted breath  
To hear the messenger of death.  
But when he had regained his eye  
And looked anew up to the sky,  
How changed the tide of circumstance!  
A cataract of radiance  
Falls slanting to him from the sun  
Through gorges deep of cloudland dun,  
And racing down the sunbeam's slope  
Roll the bright caravans of Hope.

Lincoln resumed his former stride,  
Yet floated on an inward tide  
Which flooded to the brim his soul,  
As he read in the future's scroll:  
“And still I would not hate a man,  
Let his skin be a coppered tan;  
I hate the hate of race,  
Little it hath of grace;

But still I feel that blob of lead  
Burrowing Abraham Lincoln's head  
Before I ever saw the light  
Which lifted these two eyelids out of night.  
Grandfather mine, Oh, Abraham,  
Thy fate my brain must still embalm,  
With thee I interlink in name,  
And in the blood from which I came.  
But a yet deeper tie I feel,  
On mine thy death has set its seal,  
In me thy dark foreshadow I deservy:  
By bullet in the brain I, too, shall die."

The sentence scarcely had he uttered  
When all the empyrean muttered  
In louder-growing growls around him,  
Which seemed in forecast to confound him;  
Down Heaven's hills of clouded zones  
Zeus bowls his heaviest thunder-stones,  
Cracks the huge reservoir of storm  
Above that solitary form;  
The deluge falls together in a crash,  
And on the patient earth doth ply its lash  
Plaited of million million rain-drawn strands  
Which whip from skiey dome the lowly lands.  
The thunder seemed to punctuate  
What that one man would state,  
And wrote down in its dripping ink  
Whatever he might think,  
And the quick letters of the lightning's writ

Stirred in him a prophetic wit,  
While Heaven's deep reverberating chords  
Found echo in his words.

Soon to a drizzle swooned the sheeted rain,  
The dark demoniac clouds took wings,  
No more was felt their heavy watery chain,  
Which thralled the earth's aspiring under-  
lings.

Lincoln picked up his mind again  
Just where the thunderbolt shot it atwain,  
By mighty claps of cannonade  
Roaring as if the globe must be unmade,  
And in its cosmic graveyard laid.  
But now he muses, once more whirled  
From the wild outer to his inner world,  
Calls up afresh the image gory  
Which reddens his ancestral story:  
“My father's tale it was, his only tale,  
And he rehearsing it would tremble pale,  
The terror of the child reveal  
Which I, a child, would also feel.  
It ne'er grew stale to me, a boy,  
Who found in story all my joy;  
I heard the feats of border fights  
Between the Indians and the Whites,  
Recounted in heroic way  
By heroes who had led the fray.  
Of these one far surpassed the rest  
E'en though they did their very best—

The frontier hero of the West  
He rose, enduring every test;  
And still my heart thrills to the rune  
Which chants the deeds of Daniel Boone.”  
Here Lincoln whirled around to see  
What now the judgment of the skies might be;  
Then picked he up the fallen thread,  
Still talking to himself, he said:

“Our Governor a call to arms  
Has sent to all these scattered farms  
To meet with like the red man’s harms;  
I shall pay back my Indian debt  
Inherited, but paid not yet.  
There’s not a man on this frontier  
Who has not felt what I feel here  
And with it dropped the trickling tear—  
Who could not tell my story’s counterpart  
Oft with a fiercer frenzy of the heart,  
And fiercer flashes of the eye  
From burning wells of memory,  
Which now burst up along the ways  
And set the prairies all ablaze.  
The borderers rise, and on the run  
They mass themselves with shouldered gun,  
To turn back on the savage  
His self-same bloody ravage.  
For generations back my kin  
Right on this battle-line have been—  
This battle-line ‘tween white and red

Which will be drawn till one be dead;  
Yet this my own reproach I have to face:  
How can you help destroy a race?"  
So Lincoln strode along the way  
And let the rain strive with the ray,  
He fough't all in himself a fray;  
He was both sides, was joy and rue,  
Was victor and the vanquished too,  
Was right and wrong, was good and bad,  
An inward civil war he had,  
He overjoyed in gladness,  
He oversighed in sadness,  
When his embattled hosts of brain would meet  
In triumph and defeat.

## II.

He came unto a meadow brook  
On which a willow drew his look.  
Its wattled head seemed bowed in prayer,  
As shrouded in a holy hood,  
And breathed an introverted mood  
Along the silent gloaming air;  
Each twig drooped earthward in devotion  
And stilled its every petty motion;  
Each little leaf was bended down  
Before high Heaven's throned frown;  
It wept in drops as if in pain,  
The tears were furnished by the rain.  
A man beneath the willow stood,

A stranger in the neighborhood,  
But somehow of that prayerful tree,  
The human counterpart he seemed to be,  
Brothered in universal sympathy ;  
Out of a mild benignant face  
He threw a gleam of God's own grace.  
His old straw hat was badly shattered  
His coat was round his body scattered,  
And pantaloons in places tattered,  
While out his windowed shoes  
Would peep two lines of toes.  
He held in hand a sack of seeds,  
Which he would plant as his good deeds,  
That others could enjoy the fruit  
When he, the giver, might be mute.  
No recompense he gained for good,  
Little he recked of gratitude,  
Planting a seed alone he stood.  
He asked no man for aid,  
On Heaven and himself was stayed.

Lincoln came up to him and thought :  
"Somewhere that favor I have caught ;  
But I can't tell exactly how,  
That character I've known ere now ;"  
But he could not the when or where awake  
From sleeping memory, and so he spake ;  
"What are you doing here, good friend ?  
A helping hand I'll gladly lend."  
"This by-way nook I seek to plant

Which will be drawn till one be dead;  
Yet this my own reproach I have to face:  
How can you help destroy a race?"  
So Lincoln strode along the way  
And let the rain strive with the ray,  
He fought all in himself a fray;  
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Who of the All-in-All plays heir,  
A wandering cosmopolite  
Who suns himself in his own light.  
But when the youth got to divine  
The sudden whirl of that last line,  
Which whizzed itself into his heart,  
He felt the barb of a prophetic dart  
Him soothing in its very smart.  
He scanned anew the stranger's face,  
Bespake him in a kindly tone:  
“I've seen you in some other place  
Which will not let itself be known.”  
The man wheeled on his heel to go,  
And dryly said: “I guess that's so.”  
But then as if he caught a sudden gleam  
His countenance rayed out its sunniest beam  
As he to Lincoln voiced a whispered dream:  
“Me thou shalt see another day  
More now to thee I cannot say.”  
At once the stranger swiftly sped  
And vanished in the silvery billows  
Along a shore of waving willows,  
He trod an airy winged tread,  
His footsteps tipped the ground in their sure  
speed,  
He hardly seemed the solid earth to need,  
Bearing along his bag of seed.

## III.

When out of sight had fled that form,  
And far away had rolled the storm,  
This younger newer Abraham  
Had soothed the lion and the lamb,  
Which crouching lay within his breast,  
For each of them had there its nest,  
Though both just now be medicined to rest.  
In mind he bore a lighter load,  
Trudging along the muddy road,  
To Richland where the warriors planned  
To choose the captain of their band;  
The election was at hand.  
Some others met him on the way,  
And soon they had his brain at play  
With story, fable, anecdote  
Which tickled laughter in each throat,  
And tuned the time to merry note;  
Then more yet joined at the cross-road,  
A little human river flowed  
Toward Richland, when a voice cried out  
Raised vehemently to a shout:  
“Abe Lincoln, you the captain be  
Of this our prairie company.”  
When thunderous vociferation  
Had noised the people’s approbation,  
That same stout voice cried Halt to the whole  
group,  
Then spoke to Lincoln there before the troop:

“You have a roaring rival in the field,  
Your tonguey turns Kirkpatrick cannot wield;  
Although he runs a water mill,  
Your clapper is a better still;  
He owns indeed a well-tilled farm,  
But yours is much the brawnier arm.  
He has, they say, a slave, a nigger,  
But that out here makes him no bigger,  
An old cocked hat and regimentals  
He dons with other incidentals,  
When he comes out to yearly muster  
To air aristocratic bluster.  
And then he is a man unlean  
He is too fat is what I mean.  
You, Abraham, are just the man  
Lank and long-legged as a pelican,  
Can wade the swamps of Illini  
Or rise and o'er the tree-tops fly,  
Soaring above the Sangamon  
And prairies flat we stand upon.  
I dare him clinch you in a tussle  
Despite his bluster and his bustle;  
In making an off-hand stump-speech  
Him can you many a lesson teach,  
Your tongue and arms are longer, each to  
each,  
Than his two, stretch them as he may,  
Both yours and his must measured be to-day;  
His arm and tongue with yours must gallop  
Like racing horses twain

To see which can the other wallop  
And as best man the prize obtain.  
When both of you come to the twist,  
He dares not butt against Abe Lincoln's fist,  
And given all his power and glory,  
He cannot with you swop a story."

The people seems to speak in that one voice  
When it gets down to talking to the boys;  
Uproared in mass that leveled crowd  
To rival upper thunder of the cloud.  
Lincoln's first thought was to decline,  
He could not put his men in line;  
Little he knew of military drill,  
His knowledge of the foe was smaller still.  
But he bethought himself anew:  
There rose two sparkling eyes upon his view,  
Flashing ambition in his heart,  
Along with echoes of a subtler art  
Which softly throbbed a dulcet smart,  
Whose twinge he deftly kept concealed  
Though it to him his holier self revealed.

But out the game he could not stay,  
He soon came back from far away,  
Hearing again a clang of tongue  
Which from the prairie flat was sung.  
Another man spoke up his pleasure  
Whose name we shall leave out this measure;  
His voice was cracked in sundry streaks of  
spite,

While setting up his democratic right:  
“Kirkpatrick holds his head too high,  
We’ll prairie him out of his sky,  
And bring him down to our country’s level,  
He means to us the very Devil  
He piques himself upon his ancestry,  
And cannot say enough of quality.  
You are the better man in muscle,  
First challenge him to try a tussle;  
The brain you have to boot, I know,  
That never have you failed to show,  
For you can write the fairest hand  
Of any body in this border land,  
Can tell a yarn or make a speech,  
Can any common man outreach  
With your long arms and longer head;  
The leader ought not to be led  
By aristocracy of blood;  
That bodes our country little good;  
You must the champion chosen be,  
Abe, dare the captaincy.”

But to the village they have come,  
Stepping the beat of the big bass-drum  
And the rack-a-tack of the little tambour,  
Two dozen borderers or more.  
Already others had gathered there,  
And some were still arriving;  
Rumors of war buzzed in the air  
Like busy swarms of bees a-hiving,

They slaughtered the redskin with many a  
damn,  
Which blazed in speech aflame with liquor's  
dram;  
Always the word became more bloody  
Shot through and through with charge of  
toddy;  
At last the squads of men repair  
Toward a grassy public square,  
With whoops which would the Indians scare,  
Had they been only there.  
Some wore their buckskin pantaloons,  
With caps made of the skins of coons  
Others were dressed in butternut  
That always showed a home-grown cut,  
Blue jeans was in great favor, too,  
And lent to yellow its skiey hue;  
To mud was trod the loamy street  
In chorus kneaded by many feet;  
April still tried the clouds to drain,  
Spirting adown her rivulets of rain,  
And from celestial sprinkling-pots,  
Kept watering her earthly garden spots.

The men had yelled the final cheer,  
When every mouth was oped and every ear,  
And all began to electioneer.  
The war of offices, now uppermost,  
Must first be fought out by that host;  
Of tongues there were at least three score

Which started up a pattering roar,  
Like musketry in battle  
That never stops its rattle;  
The big guns too were getting loaded,  
But had not yet their charge exploded.

The rival strutted through the throng,  
To it he seemed not to belong;  
He was the only man who wore store-clothes,  
And rode a blooded horse in pompous pose,  
Against the drizzling shower he spread  
A silk umbrella o'er his head,  
A thing unknown to all that crowd  
Who at such weapon jeered aloud;  
His twisting corkscrew of a nose,  
Go where he might, would make him foes,  
And oft he twitched his countenance,  
As if he tasted wormwood in each glance  
He threw upon the multitude  
Who everywhere about him stood.  
But when the sun strode out his cover  
In golden panoply of lover,  
And laughed down on the earth his beams  
Then all the folk in his inviting gleams  
Together roll with mighty crush,  
And to a pile of logs they rush,  
And it their prized center make,  
As if just that were all the stake.  
“A speech! a speech!” the cry first heard—  
The leader must be master of the word;

“From Lincoln’s Abe a speech, a speech!”  
The roar resounded round the welkin’s reach.  
His stalwart form o’ertopped the rest,  
Of them he was, yet was the best;  
He mounted there upon a log,  
Before him stood the crowd agog;  
“Here, hold my old straw hat,” he said  
“No, keep it on your brush-heap head  
To shade your phiz and roof your poll,  
Now let from under it the stories roll;  
We want no stunning style from you,  
Rail-splitter of the Sangamon,  
Maul on the wedge till it rive through  
And one good job of jaw get done.”  
So spoke the people’s voice reduced to one;  
Meanwhile the speech of Lincoln had begun:

“My country’s call to-day I hear.  
And so I come a volunteer  
Against the murderous savages,  
Who have renewed their ravages;  
When we but think of all their brutal broils,  
The blood of us frontiersmen boils.  
The battle has come down to sons from sires,  
In us still glow the old ancestral fires  
Enkindled long ago to flaming strife  
Between the white and red for death and life;  
From generation to generation  
We stand the vanguard of the nation.  
But when the war is done, come back

I shall and tread the same old track;  
You know I am a candidate  
To make the law for this whole State;  
My creed I shall at once make known,  
It is to improve the Sangamon,  
Which to the Illinois will stream  
Bearing us on as in a dream.  
Into the Mississippi float  
Behold our Sangamonian boat;  
Then to the Gulf and to the Ocean,  
Of all the world we'll share the motion,  
The universe, I have to think  
Needs us to get along—or else 'twill sink."

Whereat the applause did seem to tear  
To very shreds the domed air  
Which overarched the shouters there;  
Each flintlock old was held on high  
And shot in chorus up the sky,  
Making a noisy celebration  
Since just next door stood all creation;  
Such was the backwoods aspiration  
Stirred by Abe Lincoln's speech upon  
The navigable Sangamon.  
The people's voice again spoke single,  
The many tongues turned one in tune and  
time  
And lilted in a kind of common jingle,  
Which somehow fits into this rhyme:  
"The tallest cornstalk, Lincoln, is just you,

With biggest ear of corn  
From prairie ever born,  
With all the silken tassels streaming too,  
You never fail to tick the tickle spot,  
You read us off down to the dot;  
Give us another sample of that lot.”

But now the rival has his turn,  
Haughty he peers about and stern,  
For he the trend may well discern.  
With his fat jowl high up he treads,  
And from his perch looks o'er their heads,  
Then he begins to talk  
At that big-eared unhusked cornstalk:

“I know this Lincoln and his clan,  
Awhile he was my hired man,  
In yarning he would spin his time,  
Would crack a joke and make a rhyme,  
He liked his work less than his play,  
I sent him off, he could not stay  
Upon my place another day  
When I him once had tried.  
He has no horse, for none can pay,  
And if he had he cannot ride  
As it becomes a captain in the line,  
He has no sword, but here is mine,  
Worn by my father at Tippecanoe,  
Where it he boldly drew  
Against this same Black Hawk,

Of whom so much is now the talk.  
Its flash beheld Tecumseh too,  
When up in Canada he met his fate.  
And though I am no candidate,  
I still have something in my pate;  
I give my time to the public will,  
Though busy with my farm and mill;  
Lincoln is out of a job, I hear,  
And so he comes a volunteer;  
To country he will now be true,  
And fight and bleed and die for her with you,  
As he has nothing else to do.”

Then Jack of Clary’s Grove spoke out  
Once thrown by Lincoln in a bout,  
But now Abe’s over-zealous friend  
Who would at once the contest end:  
“Now for a wrestling match to test  
Of all these men who is the best;  
Only the best man here can be  
The captain of this company.  
Lincoln, Kirkpatrick on this ground  
Show us your bodies wriggling round,  
And if it can’t be settled with a twist,  
Why, then decide it with the fist.”

The rival sullenly drew off,  
Muttering his mood in sulky scoff:  
“The tall rail-splitter may strain more  
strength,

The thin wood-chopper may stretch more length,  
That does not give him skill  
This company to drill;  
And though he tell a funny story,  
That leads us not to battle's glory.”  
And Lincoln too slid off aside,  
Such contest would he not abide,  
But the crowd shouted: “the match! the  
match!  
Step up ye twisters to the scratch.”  
Then Lincoln to divert them sought,  
Therewith a lesson also taught;  
He showed that he at once was able  
To turn to use a little fable:

“All animals,” quoth he, “were once like  
men,  
They came and talked together then  
As we do now upon this green,  
Speakers they had too, fat and lean.  
The frogs got somehow in a muddle,  
They could not stand it in their puddle,  
For each and all would croak together,  
Their gabbing tongues must have a tether.  
So they resolved to choose a king  
To rule that most unruly thing:  
The sonorous bellow of the big bull frog  
When in the swamp he mounts a log;  
Who shall be king? Who shall be king?

Did through all leaping frog-town ring;  
One of ourselves or some other beast  
Who can us swallow at his feast?  
The news that last came to my hearing  
They all were still electioneering.”

The crowd felt just a little rub,  
The story had a sly-shot nub  
Which struck them with its stub.  
Whereat a busy buzz uprose  
From out that swarm of friends and foes  
Until one mouth seemed these and those:  
“Abe, you are of all the big bull-frog,  
Hop up again upon that log,  
And yawp another yarn like that,  
You have a hundred of them pat.”  
“No more,” said he, “but to the choice  
We must now pass at once, my boys;  
Black Hawk is burning, stealing, slaying,  
While here we stand debating and delaying,  
To choose the leader let us now proceed,  
The time roars like a tempest for the deed,  
Hump down to work and quit this babble,  
When we have done, again we’ll gabble.”

But suddenly he stopped in doubt,  
A turn of thought wheeled him about,  
He felt he had left something out;  
Cloudy he lifted up his look,  
His knotted hand he raised and shook,

And then another turn he took.  
He thought of the portentous hap  
Which loomed just then on Southern map,  
In which to him lurked the dread fates  
Of these entire United States.  
For Lincoln felt the people whole  
With a sort of universal soul,  
Already he was national  
And in himself he saw the country all;  
"Just one more thing I have to tell,"  
Says he, "which makes for Heaven or Hell.  
Two men will leaders be  
Of this our little company—  
In which a speck I seem to see  
Of one great contest yet to be.  
Let both of us without defection,  
Pledge now to stand by the election,  
Kirkpatrick here as well as me,  
Whoever may be chosen, I or he,  
I swear to obey the majority;  
I shall not have to be coerced,  
Let happen what for me is worst.  
Kirkpatrick, will you take this oath,  
Whose sacredness should bind us both?  
I shall enlist with you  
If beaten I shall be;  
Will you enlist with me  
If you do not pull through?  
Or will you try  
To nullify?"

A sudden silence hushed the multitude,  
All faces turned to where the rival stood  
Intently gazing on the air,  
Until the shout resounded, “Swear”.  
The man seemed wrestling in a transfor-  
mation

Which was akin to God’s salvation,  
Just then he must decide his own self-strife,  
And turn around a corner in his life.  
He had to go to worse or better,  
Rivet or rive his ancient fetter;  
A light through all his being ran,  
Lincoln’s test was making him a man.  
The crowd stood silent all the while  
Waiting but could not even smile,  
At last the people’s voice roared upward  
there  
Repeating louder: “Kirkpatrick, swear.”

He reared his head again, but not in pride,  
A man regenerate he was inside  
Through Lincoln’s priestly mediation,  
But mighty rolled his perspiration.  
At once he flashed his eyes of glede:  
“No, no, I never shall secede.  
Though I be beaten at the poll  
As private I shall still enroll—  
Put down my name upon that scroll.”  
So spake he now, a new-born soul,  
To Lincoln, who the scribe was then,

Best wielder of the people's pen,  
Who wrote the name that bright it shone  
In neatest script beside his own.  
Spake Lincoln up with face delighted,  
Though hitherto it was benighted  
With a sombre melancholy line,  
Through which his humor now could shine:  
"The best is this! United we shall go,  
United stand against whatever foe.  
A dim presentiment I could not hide,  
Lest my election should perchance divide  
Our band atwain in bitter hate,  
So that my office might create  
A little civil war within our little state.  
Already of secession I have heard,  
My soul grows murky at the word,  
But my foreboding fantasy pass by—  
The ballot now we have to try:  
All ye who vote me captain, toe this line  
Beside me—you will then be counted mine."

When out his mouth had sped these words,  
Beside him sprang at once two-thirds  
And more, of the whole sixty-eight,  
Whereat he still forefelt his fate  
As if the small might yet be great.  
A moment there he gazed afar  
As if he saw another war,  
A distant time he seemed all rapt in  
When he again was chosen Captain.

## IV.

About a pivot's turn was Lincoln whirled,  
The rounding of his new career  
Dizzied the youthful volunteer,  
To one fantastic moment shrank the world,  
Until he somehow squared his head  
And out the whiz himself he led.  
Suddenly he woke up to the act,  
And grappled with the present fact:  
“Attention, company, shoulder arms”—  
The flintlocks gathered from the farms  
Rattled together at their best,  
The powder-horn slung round the breast,  
And pouch with bullet-moulds and knife,  
The implements of death and life,  
All which from childhood they had handled,  
About their bodies gaily dandled;  
Some proudly bore a blanket too,  
A bedquilt some, of speckled hue,  
Pieced by their mothers when it was new,  
But most kept all such gewgaws out of view.  
Then Captain Lincoln gave command  
When he in front had taken stand,  
He towered over all the rest,  
His features said he meant no jest:  
“Forward march! now follow me,  
The foremost I must always be  
As Captain of this company—  
The first man to be shot or shoot,  
Whether mounted or on foot.

But to New Salem next we go,  
Some gear it has for me I know;  
There we can borrow Mentor Graham's flag,  
As sash I'll find some old red rag,  
And I must get some neighbor's nag,  
I own myself a fuzzy saddle-bag.  
Perchance I may pick up a sword"—  
Somehow he falters at the coming word,  
A sudden image in his bosom bobs,  
And makes it thrill unworded throbs,  
So that he speechless moves along,  
Self-occupied with inner throng.  
But the chief reason is kept down  
Why Lincoln marches to New Salem town.

Still on they pushed, and Lincoln led  
The swaying line by his high head  
Through which was surging many a thought,  
Of what that one brief day had brought.  
The wheeling point of years it seemed,  
The living of an entire life foregleamed,  
The present deed of all the future dreamed  
In fleeting magical reflection,  
Which would not wait for close inspection.  
His outspread years in one diurnal dot  
Seemed crushed together on a little spot,  
These people took him as their choice,  
That came to him a far-off voice,  
He had no skill in this vocation,

And still they chose him for their highest station.

Nor could he well forget that face benign  
Which did his soul with grace beshine,  
And left him with a promise still  
Which he has ever to fulfill.

A passion too in bosom deeply hidden,  
Would upward well to memory unbidden.  
By many feelings he was goaded,  
His inner world was overloaded,  
Still now and then, to get relief,  
He would relate a story brief.

Marching along thus occupied  
He let some minutes swiftly slide,  
When suddenly with waked-up look  
He sharply eyed around, and took  
A searching glance at all, as if he tried  
To find a missing man  
Most needful to his plan;  
But soon his mien gleamed satisfied:  
'Twas when he came to scan  
Kirkpatrick walking in the ranks  
And sharing in the soldiers' pranks,  
Tramping in mud just like them all,  
Without his silken parasol,  
Taking the rain and sun atwain, together—  
Whatever be the weather,  
Dropping his aristocracy's pretension,  
Yet with a lordly condescension.

Then Lincoln could not help but utter  
Quite to himself though in a mutter:  
"True man he is beneath that fatted skin,  
An office he shall have as his just prize,  
If I can only get him in  
When the whole regiment doth organize.  
I did not like his dewlap chin  
Puffed in contempt and pride;  
But now I see his other side—  
I could not feel his loyal spirit  
In such thick layers doubly rolled,  
Nor soul in such a deep outside insulted;  
Justice I must now give his merit,  
His character is gold."

In native contemplation caught  
Lincoln still carried on his nearest thought:  
"Methinks secession shows no sign  
Within this little band of mine,  
And yet the dread of it me haunted,  
As damned ghost far down implanted  
In the first fountain of my being—  
That ghost I cannot shun the seeing.  
And here appears no nullification,  
Which holds a bonfire celebration  
Just now down yonder in Caroline,  
With Andy Jackson getting into line:  
He will not fail to give the countersign.  
An earnest of myself he seems  
A sun beshining me with far-off gleams—  
But I must halt these daytime dreams."

Young Abraham looked up and sighted  
New Salem town; he stepped delighted,  
That image fleeted round again  
Despite the pleasure and the pain,  
The knowledge and the ignorance,  
Weaving the web of circumstance  
With all the ups and downs of chance.  
Through sticky mud with many a puff  
The soldiers reach the rising bluff,  
On which the houses sleep in silent sheen  
While citizens pour out upon the green,  
Which overlooks a little stream,  
Ambitious Sangamon in sunlit dream;  
Now flaunting wide its yellow flood  
It challenges the solar golden gleam,  
And channels field and wood  
Filled full of April rain,  
Which one year hence may come again.  
It seems to say to Lincoln and all there:  
“See I can a steamboat bear  
If you will only clear my track;  
Here launch it on my back.”  
Lincoln heard the voice but cannot stay,  
Yet took the time within to pray:  
“Fair nymph, thee I shall heed another day,  
When the present task is done  
And the Captain’s laurel won;  
So then, sweet water-sprite, don’t cry,  
Though now I have to say good-bye.”  
Whereat he turned and up the hill

He trod in tune to his bosom's thrill,  
Which seemed to lift him on soft pillows  
And skyward float him in its billows.  
Spry Lincoln, as he lightly climbed above,  
Rose winged with the thought of love;  
And though he kept it nestled in his breast,  
The honeyed sting gave him no rest,  
And was by many a fantasy caressed;  
The image lisped to him unbidden,  
But his reply was always hidden.

Then from his reverie sublime  
He was jerked down to earth and time,  
For now the notes of fifer and of drummer  
Make shrill salute to the new-comer;  
A batch of the most piercing tunes  
Are fiercely fife by old Tom Cunes,  
The tiptop fifer of the county,  
Who never spared his music's bounty,  
On all he spent his shrilly overflow  
Which failed not to the bone to go.  
A hurricane he could outblow  
And make its blasts much smaller feel,  
Puckering his breath into a squeal,  
As he the measures off would reel,  
Boomed by the big drum's monotone  
Which tuned the tempo to its drone  
And smote the snarling snare-drum's under-  
tone.  
So now with bodies bobbing up and down,

With Lincoln in his loftiest lead,  
Gleaming as if he wore their jeweled crown  
For doing the heroic deed,  
The soldier boys mount to New Salem town.

## Canto Second.

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### *THE CONFLICT OF RACES.*

#### I.

Far up the Mississippi's flood  
A solitary Indian stood;  
The river and the rivulet  
In many murmurous gushes met,  
And babbled round the long-necked strand  
Where Black Hawk's boat had drawn to land  
In silent moonless night  
Which shut the sheen from human sight.  
To him the spot of old was known,  
And from the heart's far-down abyssm,  
Despite his Indian stoicism  
He heaved a heavy-laden moan;

“Upon the graves of those most dear,  
I, the lone Redskin, drop a tear;

Many a mile I've sneaked my way,  
By night, and hid myself by day,  
Till I have reached the holy grounds,  
Where lie within their little mounds  
My fathers taking their last sleep,  
Unwept by those who ought to weep.  
I scarce know where to go or stop,  
The land is covered with the white man's  
    crop;  
My people's ancient burial-place  
Is taken by another race—  
That cunning, cruel, whited face—  
Who tills the sacred ashes of my mother,  
And sells the risen body of my brother,  
Who, like cannibal, can eat  
The red man's flesh grown up in wheat,  
And builds his church, to the foundation  
    stones,  
Out of our very skulls and bones.  
Ye whites—ye are the savage race.  
Perish ye shall without a trace;  
What you to me and mine have sought to do  
**I shall pay back to you."**

So seethed Black Hawk as once he stood,  
And voiced the rush of vengeful blood  
At the sad sight of his old village  
Begrown and green with a new tillage,  
Which the fresh emigrant had taught  
The earth to yield when rightly wrought.

Two rivers formed a tongue of land,  
The mighty Mississippi and  
The lesser purling stream called Rock  
In honor of its stony stock;  
He from the far-off Iowa  
Had hither crept his forest way;  
To Prophetstown his path did bend  
Where the red Prophet dwelt,  
Who had in eestacy forefelt  
A plan the white man's power to end,  
And back the tide of settlers send.  
Black Hawk ere leaving, cast a look  
Upon the old ancestral nook:  
"Ye dead, I shall come back and stay;  
I hear your spirits to me pray,  
Ah, well I understand  
Your heavenly command,  
And must obey—  
I shall come back this very year,  
And when I die upon a day  
Be buried with my people here."

Sadly the Indian turned up stream,  
Fleeting in night as if a dream  
Through woody dell along the River  
Which gave him drink fresh from the Giver,  
Which whispered to him as of old,  
The same sweet fairy-story told  
As it pellucid o'er the pebbles rolled.  
Betimes a waterfall with white swan-wings

A shredded song of the Great Spirit sings;  
Outspreading on the tops of trees  
A guardian Manitou he sees.  
Safely he entered Prophetstown  
Without a single skiey frown,  
And in the Prophet's hut he sat him down.  
Two other men were there to meet him,  
They rose in white man's style to greet him,  
And threw dim outlines in the gloaming.  
They, too, had come from distant roaming,  
And on the self-same spot had landed,  
By hidden power together banded,  
As if to waylay weal of chance  
And rule the mighty roll of circumstance;  
By throwing pebbles in Rock river  
They thought to dam the Ocean stream for-  
ever,  
They would reverse the flow of History,  
Whirling it backward across the sea,  
Whence it had voyaged to America  
And there proposed to stay.

Another figure let us mark,  
Whose outlines shot into the dark  
So that he hardly could be seen,  
Yet he was always moving in between.  
This was the Prophet, named White Cloud,  
Who sewed his meaning in a shroud,  
Who in the future dream-world loved to  
groepe

And of it weave the web of Indian hope,  
Of which he was himself the spinning spider  
Circling the net-lines wider and yet wider,  
Until they might the land embrace,  
Entangling prey of every race.

That Prophet was the soul of wiles,  
Made faces full of priestly smiles;  
He played upon the racial hate,  
The deepest strain in man's estate,  
Red was his skin, but crossed in breed;

That undermined in him the Indian's creed,  
Which rooted deeply in the single tribe:  
No other faith the savage could imbibe.

Two hostile tribes met in the blood  
And in the soul of this red Pope,  
Two hateful halves oft made his mood  
And nullified each other's scope;

Two Indians fought in him with might,  
Each scalped the other in the fight,  
And left the Prophet blank to neither,  
So that he could be both or either,

Tribeless, loveless, yet all ambition  
To turn his dream of power to fruition:  
Deft in a savage sacerdotal cunning,  
He could in deepest malice seem but funning;

Still through his craft himself had reared  
To be the Prophet famed and feared  
By Reds in all the regions of the North:  
Some Whites, too, held him son of Earth,

Possessing a mysterious power of evil,

And leagued by blood-signed paper with the Devil.

So from afar that racial four  
Have come to spy each other's store,  
Within that little Indian hut  
Unsunned, untorched, yet smeared in smut.  
To fill the dark with darker, all took a smoke,  
They puffed the brooding calumet,  
Twirling its vapor in many a stinking jet;  
The Prophet first the clouded silence broke:

“Last night there came to me a dream:  
Black Hawk I saw recross a stream;  
It was the loving Father of Waters,  
Who, with his thousand fluff-haired daughters,  
Welcomed his greatest son as yet  
Of all the copper-mounted set,  
And bade him take again his land  
Which had been wrested from his band.  
It was the God's own invitation  
To his dear people's restoration.  
I saw the Hawk fly back to his fathers'  
    graves,  
And with him came a countless horde of  
    braves,  
Who pushed the white face over the border,  
The women and children shrieking murder;  
Beyond the Illinois they fled,  
The battle was 'tween white and red,

And all this new-born State  
We dared to desolate.  
Through the Kaskaskia we plunge,  
Across the Ohio we make a lunge  
Into Kentucky, where another race  
We come upon in our long chase;  
It is the black enslaved by white,  
He is our ally in this fight,  
The red and black shall be one nation  
United in a single federation:  
Such is to be our future story—  
One cause, one people, and one territory,  
Irradiated by one common glory.  
Now we shall wreak on whites our shame,  
What they have done we'll do the same.”

The Prophet turned then to another,  
Whom, though of different race, he called his  
brother,  
And flattered with his best attention,  
Whose name he did not fail to mention:  
“I have invited here a man  
Whose tongue can tell if any ean,  
The future of our two-raced nation,  
The scope of all our aspiration.  
Swartface, pour out thy fluid word  
And tell to these what I have often heard  
From thee, far greater than my dreams;  
In thy quick brain a new world teems.  
Let them now see our coming State

The tinted races all in it regenerate.  
The sapient lines which curl a wreath  
Upon thy brow, give to them breath.”

## II.

And who was Swartface, sitting there  
In silence sullen, as in his lair,  
Ready to pounce upon his prey,  
Unseen except his eyeballs' glare  
Which now and then would fiercely flare,  
As if they flamed to slay.  
He was no redskin, not a trace  
Ran in his blood of that dying race;  
Adopted in an Indian tribe he was,  
But only for a deeper cause,  
Red he became so as to fight  
His hated foe with greater might,  
Until his soul turned gory with despite,  
And his fierce eye shot crimson in its light.  
That foe was a Caucasian skin,  
Though to it he himself was kin,  
One-half of white he was or more,  
But the black mother gave her store  
Of race to a white father's son,  
Thus he was double, yet was one.  
As in himself he had two races,  
So he was owner of two faces,  
One writhed and wrestled in demoniac hate,  
Its lines seemed twisted dragons in the fight  
of fate,

The other face could turn and laugh at its  
own mate,  
And so with smile of courtesy,  
Yea, with a strain of chivalry  
Its wearer well it would ingratiate.  
And yet beneath his double he was whole,  
Under two faces he had one soul.  
Of a slave-mother in Virginia  
He was brought forth unto the day,  
Then to Kentucky he was sold  
When scarcely ten years old.  
To Mr. Davis of Christian County,  
A master not unkind or cold  
And not without a master's bounty.  
Swartface as the most polished one  
Of all his slaves, he gave to serve his son,  
A military officer  
Who felt ambition's deepest stir  
To put his laureled name  
Upon the scroll of fame;  
A student's prize he had already won:  
Young Davis bore the name of Jefferson.  
But at Fort Snelling one bright day  
Swartface was missing, he had run away,  
Though he as slave was treated well,  
Slavery had become to him a hell.  
He turned an Indian was the sequel,  
And by that act was free and equal  
To the best Redskin that ever was,  
Defying whites and all their laws.

For as his mother was a slave and black,  
He never could break out her fastened track  
Into his father's life and station,  
And so it was with all his generation.  
His wife and child he could not bear,  
Waifs he deemed them of despair,  
The family was but the devil's net,  
The worst of all the curses yet,  
If he a slave could only slaves beget.  
At birth he fell from the upper race  
Far down into another,  
Though he could see his full white brother  
Perched high above him in the loftiest place,  
Disowning him, though every drop of blood  
Conjoined them in a common brotherhood.  
He gnashed his teeth at such disgrace,  
Into whose Hell he had been thrown  
When born, and by no sinning of his own;  
He cursed himself as father and as son,  
In both he deemed himself undone.  
The universe itself seemed rotten,  
And Heaven too, should be thrown in,  
Damning him begetter and begotten,  
For his unsinnéd sin.  
And so, as he grew up apace,  
He brooded on the conflicts of his race,  
His tribesmen soon gave him a name  
Which dimly hinted whence he came,  
A swarthy face and ringed hair  
Showed him to be no Indian's heir.

English he well could read and write,  
Had learned them both in law's despite,  
Some of his master's books in stealth  
He had devoured, and won their wealth,  
Of verse he owned one little book  
And kept it hid in safest nook,  
From it his deepest draughts he took;  
And thus by secret education  
He shared in the new age's civilization.  
He also knew mechanic trades:  
Could shape the keen-edged tomahawk,  
And shave its helve without a balk—  
In battle, too, he made it talk.  
He fashioned every kind of blades—  
To stab, to rip, to slash,  
Anywise to make a gash—  
Possessing which the savage still,  
Though only knowing how to kill,  
Might foeman slay with foeman's skill.  
A damaged gun could Swartface fix,  
With handicraft so clever  
That it would shoot as well as ever:  
A wonder-doer for his tricks  
And knacks and works, both great and small;  
Those Redskins deemed he could do all  
By means of power magical.  
But now he plays another part  
Which shows the bottom of his heart,  
Reveals as one his dual soul  
As he looks out upon his goal;

The Indian mind he well discerned,  
The Indian tongue, too, he had learned,  
And now would speak it at its best,  
In answer to White Cloud's request:

“Mulatto I, with hybrid's hate  
For his despised debauched estate!  
But from my old condition  
Has sprung a new ambition:  
My vengeance soon I hope to sate;  
Methinks I see the coming date  
On which I shall wipe out the white,  
And give my other self its right,  
Which always was put basely down  
Until I came to Prophetstown:  
Here from man civilized I changed  
And with you savages I ranged;  
I would begin the world anew,  
All wrong it has been going hitherto.  
In every drop of blood I feel the fight  
Between the black man and the white,  
An inner civil war is mine,  
I hear it waged in wrath malign  
Of fierce contending arms,  
With all the wounds and pains and harms,  
Even to death's alarms.  
These battles inner I shall make outer,  
And there shall wage them all the stouter;  
The thunderous onset of my soul  
Will yet be echoed in the cannon's roll.

Our red men here with Black Hawk's braves,  
I shall conduct to free the slaves;  
The black and red shall then unite  
To rid us of the intruder white  
Whose land shall be our own estate,  
And we shall dwell inseparate.  
The union of the races is my plan,  
The highest union, that of man;  
The racial tint in every human face  
It is my deepest purpose to erase,  
If not by nature, then by institution,  
Of this world's war such is the last solution.  
In my best moments I can feel  
That union as the eternal commonweal,  
And then my every double drop of blood  
Becomes prophetic in me of that final good.  
But now my own twin racial halves  
Are hurtling still against themselves,  
Through every vein is running strife  
Between the double elements of life;  
I oft can hear my knuckles rattle,  
My very bones quake in the shock of battle,  
From the two races in me smiting,  
That war—I can already see it fighting,  
Mine is the white-black's vengeful hate  
Which holds me pinioned to my fate,  
So that I can but seldom rise to be  
The higher one above my fierce duality;  
I hear my mother's blood in me to rate  
My father's for its deep damnation,

And load him with the curse of all creation,  
In which the world did once begin  
Its paradise of sin.

Once more I tell my deeper scheme  
E'en though it turn out but a dream,  
For I am one at last, though two I seem :  
Two races I would make one nation,  
Which, separate, must die  
Without a trace in history—  
That is the newest federation,  
Which yet will circle the whole earth,  
With its uplifting girth  
Heaven-suspended  
And God-attended,  
Removing this curst stain of racial birth  
Which now discolors every human life,  
Ingraining it with mortal strife.”

So pictured Swartface his self-fight,  
And whizzed his fist defiant of the night,  
Upon his knee he pounded  
So that the hut resounded,  
And all his fellows felt a little fright  
Lest unawares he took them all for white.  
Two Satans in his soul appeared,  
They coiled and clinched with heads upreared,  
The white in him would damn the black,  
Who never failed to send the curses back;  
Thus each the other hissed and impreached,  
Though every blood corpuscle kept them  
mated;

The one rose up the Southern gentleman,  
The other crouched his slavèd African;  
Caucasian brain in kinky pate  
Begetting furious racial hate,  
Imprisoned was in wall of fate—  
The thick-built negro skull  
Which keeps its captive null  
And never will be broken  
Until a great new word be spoken.  
Yet Swartface had a deeper strand  
Which may to-morrow voice to him command,  
A something good far down  
Which he cannot quite drown.

The speech delighted the red Pope,  
It seemed to build the fortress of his hope  
And pinnacle topmost his tall ambition,  
Whereof he dreamed the quick fruition.  
But to the Redskins all that thought  
Of twinned alliance Swartface taught,  
Prophet was the preacher,  
Mulatto was the teacher  
Of what his own two-natured soul  
Could read within as from a scroll,  
And whisper to the Prophet when alone  
Who then would tongue the prophecy as if  
his own.  
Swartface's words pleased too, Black Hawk,  
Whose hatred loved that sort of talk,  
Who with the Prophet had agreed

To wreak the bloody deed.  
Though these two were of separate station,  
Each plied his own red-skinned vocation,  
One was the warrior, the seer the other,  
Ruling the double-headed savage state,  
And both together sought to imitate  
Warman Tecumseh and his prophet brother.  
But if the future be forecast  
By what has happened in the past  
Then it will turn out that these two  
Will also meet their Tippecanoe.

## III.

A man was present at that speech  
Whose heart it wholly failed to reach,  
Turn it around as he might please:  
Of stain Caucaesian, he was ill at ease,  
He heard his race assailed that night  
And all that was his deepest own;  
He felt himself in Hell alone,  
Although a priest anointed,  
The one full-blooded white,  
Bedamned to sulphurous racial spite,  
In this red world unjointed.  
He was of fierce Black Hawk the friend,  
Whose mind he artfully could bend,  
The savage yielded to the subtle skill  
Which gave direction to the ruder will.  
Like White Cloud too he had his priestly hope,

With whom in craft he had to cope.  
This white-skinned priest now tests another  
skin,  
Although his texture be more fine and thin;  
The exquisite diplomatist  
The subtle, dainty-worded casuist  
Who to the savage West had come  
With all the discipline of Rome,  
Now bumping, thumping, clubbing brain-pans  
blunt  
Will have to stand this rough red devil's  
brunt,  
For of that finer sacerdotal fence  
Our White Cloud had but little sense.

Thus still another race was at this feast  
Of human colors, pure and mingled,  
Held in a Winnebago tenement  
Remote from any European settlement:  
The fourth man was he, now outsingled,  
All bade him speak—this Spanish priest—  
A Jesuit missionary,  
His bearing high and military,  
Of human beings the most wary.  
Of feelings he was chary,  
A learned man at Salamanca trained,  
With Roman culture well ingrained,  
The Indian tongues he could all speak  
From the Great Lakes down to Pike's Peak,  
As well as the old Latin and the Greek;

And thence to Mexico he had a trail  
Which topped the mount and thrid the vale;  
Out Mexico it led to Spain,  
Surging across the mighty main;  
From the new world back to the old again  
He forged a strong but unseen chain;  
A continent he would concatenate  
With his own Order, Church, and State;  
A hemisphere he would put under  
One little terrene speck though far asunder,  
It interweave in priestly leading-strings,  
Keeping its folk forever underlings,  
While at recusants he could pitch some thun-  
der,

And for the faithful work a wonder.  
From upper inland seas  
Of cold Canadian land  
Till where the southern balmy breeze  
Forever summers on the Rio Grande  
He like Arachne, spun his net  
And kept it always trimly set,  
Which you would brush into, go where you  
please.

Francesco Molinar was this man named,  
For his devotion highly famed  
And for his piety religious  
As well as for his lore prodigious.  
And yet he also had his hate,  
He could not brook the American state  
So different in disposition

From the Spanish inquisition.  
The worship on the rude frontier  
Would cause in him a holy sneer,  
He sniffed too at the backwoods teacher  
With learned Jesuit compared,  
School master Mentor Graham,  
How would Francesco flay him!  
And Peter Cartwright, the cirenit preacher,  
As heretic would not be spared  
On the last Judgment Day,  
But given a Hell-lit auto-da-fé,  
With faggots by the Devil himself prepared.  
But a still deeper hatred in him lurked,  
And every fibre of his being worked,  
Aye, made him sometimes lose his balanced  
mood;  
Abhorred was the entire Teutonic brood  
From that first Gothic multitude  
Who smote to death antique high Rome,  
Then stole its ruins for their home;  
But specially this brazen Anglo-Saxon branch  
Forth sweeping westward like an avalanche,  
Whose flow no Rome-born state could stanch,  
Now threats to drive out Latin blood  
From where it had for eenturies stood,  
From high-up Canada's Great Lakes,  
Where once it set its boundary stakes,  
Then followed down the Mississippi's vale,  
Of which it told the first romantic tale.  
It seized all countries round the Gulf,

Land-hungrier than the old Roman wolf  
Which gorged the Mediterranean world;  
And then itself, to downfall hurled,  
Was speared to death by the same Teuton  
throng;

This act the Spaniard termed Time's greatest wrong.

So he had too, his ethnic hate  
Active, though ages old, and still insatiate.  
But just this war was in his eyes  
A cause the more to anathematize—  
The freck, elbowing Anglo-Saxon,  
Who, having bought the great North-West,  
Would put the Latin to the test—  
Whose President was Andrew Jackson,  
A will at times most wilful,  
And yet with cunning skillful.

Thus Molinar has found his place  
In this unceasing strife of race,  
Which courses through all history  
Down into you and me.  
In him as representative  
His Church, his State, his Stock did live,  
Nor could he ever forget his Order  
Whose head had sent him to this far-off border,

Where had begun the final strife  
Between his world and its new foe,  
Of whom he sought the overthrow,  
Ready to offer up his life.

Yet Molinar gave his laborious days  
To what he deemed the truth of God's ways,  
Capable of the greatest sacrifice  
He did himself not seek to rise.  
To sick and dying he would give his all,  
He sternly followed duty's call  
And made himself its meanest thrall.

Now in that pitch-dark Indian tenement,  
In which as lightless  
All must be sightless,  
Every tint of skin was getting eloquent.  
First Molinar had to dissent  
From the Mulatto's argument;  
All heard the tell-tale face,  
Unseen it spoke the race.  
The Hybrid must dislike him as a White,  
Each felt the other's spite,  
And failed not to requite.  
For Molinar upheld his kind,  
And culture too he highly prized,  
Would keep the world still civilized  
If only moulded to his mind.  
But that red Prophet's lofty hope,  
Sounded to him like that of antipope,  
In word and also thought;  
To deal with him he hardly ought,  
As twin of the incarnate evil,  
As Mother Church's very Devil.  
The heathen doctor he could not abide,

And still his horror he must deftly hide;  
Yet each was priest to his own kind,  
Each had a trait of priestly mind,  
And thought the other far behind  
In knowledge of the deity,  
What God Himself would do and be;  
In fine, each deemed his side quite free  
Of sacerdotal jealousy,  
But held the other thus afflicted  
And bad results thereof predicted.  
The Hawk called on the priest once and  
again  
To say to their far-reaching scheme amen,  
And to invoke the white man's God  
His folk to chastise with the sinner's rod;  
A gentle clerkly tone he took  
Whose dulcet flow him ne'er forsook:

“Vengeance is not the way divine,  
Let charity be always thine,  
Forbearance is the holier dower,  
And love imparts the greater power.  
Whoso avenges, commits sin,  
And Heaven's bliss can never win,  
But even here below his own  
Comes back to him in many a groan;  
The Sacred Scripture oft hath said,  
With what ye pay, ye shall be paid;  
If it be Hate, your portion Hate shall be  
If it be Love, reward will just agree.

Duty to Holy Church is first,  
To scorn its sealed priest is worst;  
Confess to him thy hidden heart  
If thou wouldst choose the better part.  
One Spirit Great rules over red and white—  
That is the truth which rays all light.  
Him would I bring to you, for He  
Loves every race impartially;  
Red, black, and white are all his children  
dear,  
He will you save if you but hear,  
And free you of the future's fear.

“Good is this Spirit of whom I've told;  
But hark! there is a Spirit bad and bold,  
Who sometimes gets his grip on men,  
Clutching them down into his den,  
Where burns a pitchy fire infernal  
Which causes tears and pangs eternal.  
Americans are of the Devil's brood,  
Not children of the Spirit good,  
Foes of his Church and State and Stock,  
Their further progress we must block,  
Or else by Satan's imps be jammed,  
Or e'en with them to Hell be damned.  
With you Black Hawk I shall unite  
To vent on them the Lord's own spite,  
And drive them backward whence they came  
Over the Alleghenies, in God's name.  
Yet of these facial shades no perfect play

Can be without another tinted ray;  
Three colors make our racial prism  
Which I shall bless with holy chrism;  
To red and black I'll add my mite—  
Another stain—it is the white,  
All three I shall here consecrate  
As corner-stone of newest House of State,  
In which will dwell the social ultimate.  
My race will unify your double nation,  
My third your two will mediate,  
And weld your new confederation,  
Rounding it out to fend off fate.  
The sign of God Himself we see  
Stamped on this racial trinity,  
Which I shall bless in holy rite,  
And fill it with the Lord's own might.  
I now proclaim it Heaven's plan:  
All races join against the American,  
Who stands athwart the unity of man."

So spake Francesco Molinar, . . .  
Who had some hate still left for war  
Against the foe hereditary,  
And who had journeyed from afar  
Through space, down time,  
With fortitude sublime,  
To meet him on the Western prairie  
For final tug extraordinary  
Between the Latin and Teutonic mettle  
The future course of History to settle.

He is the Soldier of his Order  
Against heresiarchs of the young border  
Just drawn between the old and new  
Which now the Mississippi brings to view:  
As once upon the rambling Rhine  
His ancestor defended Caesar's line  
Against the same onpressing brood  
Which could not be withstood.  
Apostle too he was political,  
And weened he might perpetuate  
Out here the Latin State;  
He could be very critical  
Of this new-fledged demoeracy  
Compared to good old Spain's autoeracy;  
A President instead of King  
For him had a demoniae ring;  
His well-galled tongue spared not attacks on  
The people's hero, Andrew Jackson,  
The type of westering Anglo-Saxon.

Still the humanitarian  
Would see in both the one white skin—  
The Latin and the Teuton were blood-kin,  
For both of them were Aryan.  
And if far back in time we reach,  
We hear them talking each to each.  
Just in the self-same syllables of speech.

Swartface made ready to attack  
This argument of priestly Spain,

But by the Prophet was held back,  
Whose speech ran in the following vein:  
“We three must pull as one at least,  
And join this crusade with the priest,  
Who has his end as we have ours,  
United we must wield our powers;  
Divided we are lost  
And might as well give up the ghost.”  
Uneasy Black Hawk here broke in:  
“I must return now to my kin  
And rouse them with all speed,  
Though Keokuk will try to check my deed  
With the rattle of his talking mill,  
But Jesuit has equal skill.  
Thou Molinar, must go with me,  
Important work I have for thee.  
My dreamful White Cloud, now good-bye,  
I see the day of vengeance nigh;  
And stormy hero, strong Swartface  
Get ready to wake up thy race,  
Then with the toiling African  
We’ll start confederated man.”  
The Prophet’s face shone like a star  
Flashing a word to Molinar:  
“Go with Black Hawk, I cannot go,  
One priest is enough, and I have much to do;  
I’ll keep aflame our lofty scope  
And weld all races in one hope;  
Now to the trial of it.”  
So blazed ambitious the red Prophet,

In tonguey bodeful flare  
Which seemed the Lord to dare  
To Molinar, who tittered a teehee scoff,  
Whispering to Black Hawk: "Let's be off."

## IV.

When they had gone, the speech outeropped  
Of Swartface overfull, who had been stopped  
By the sly Prophet politie,  
Lest unity might get a crick.

"That cunning priest," quoth he, "I should  
have told,

All that his people seek is gold;  
I read in story of the Spanish,  
They are as greedy and as clannish  
As the English whom they hate,  
And brand as avaricious and ingrate,  
But always underrate.

They stole the Africans for slaves,  
And worked the Reds to rapid graves,  
His fight is but a selfish fight  
Of white against another white,  
In which he will make us his tool  
That he may win his nation's rule—  
He will not find me such a fool,  
Though his soft speech be Latin  
With surface smooth as satin.

I care not for his Nation, Church or Stock  
To which comes ever back his talk;

I reach down to the race,  
And on it all my world I base;  
In him our master still is white  
And we are slaves without a right,  
I scarce can bear him in my sight.  
That priest still grades the human creature,  
Tracing the turn and tint of feature;  
I tell thee my sole creed  
Which I shall make my deed:  
As I hate the facial  
So I love the racial.  
And list me thou, the newest pope,  
No longer in the narrows grope,  
Be not the shallow-pated priest of faces,  
But universal mediator of the races.”

So spake that semi-African  
And glorying glimpsed the greatness of his  
plan;  
But when he had himself thus heard  
He could not stop, he was so stirred  
By the momentum mighty of his word:  
“That Priest holds Black Hawk under thumb  
But back to us he is not like to come.  
For he will try to win sage Keokuk,  
But with that chief will have no luck,  
At such mishap the self-same day  
He well may start the other way;  
Bent on his trail to Mexico  
I seem to see him go,

And thence perhaps again  
He will be landed in old Spain,  
And so he will complete life's round  
Returning to his early stamping-ground,  
Where he will find his Church and State and  
Order

Just at their central hold of power,  
Still living on their ancient dower,  
And cooped up in their medieval tower,  
Far from the Mississippi border.

He stands, if he go with us, in the way;  
He's past, whatever he may do or say,  
Of this great futuring North West  
Where is to be the New World's best,  
He never can get hold,  
His world is all too old,  
Besides, it is unfree,  
Transplanted here it cannot be,  
I doubt if him again we'll ever see,  
Let him but glimpse futurity."

The Prophet here sprang to his feet  
And forward leaped as if to greet  
His lofty-coming destiny;  
To Swartface he proclaimed at once:  
"You need not take me for a dunce;  
Francesco thinks he's using me  
To build up his supremacy,  
But I am working at my own,  
Although I throw him now and then a bone.

With his fine ways I must be charmed,  
Still, Swartface dear, be not alarmed;  
Me but a savage dull' he deems,  
A redskin prophet given up to dreams,  
Whom he with ease can overmatch,  
But I shall bring him to the scratch;  
Priest against priest—both are divine,  
A trick I'll show him in his own line.  
A coppery juggler to the white,  
I'll turn him inside out to his own sight.  
But let me now repeat to thee  
What thou hast oft inspired in me:  
I would not be a priest of sect or stock,  
Latin or Teuton, whatever be the grade—  
Black, white or red, of every shade,  
All men all-tinted make my flock,  
In that my thought is one with yours,  
We shall take in all out-of-doors.”

Here Swartface stops the flow of dreams  
With which the brain of White Cloud teems:  
“Let us the plan now execute  
On which we often have agreed,  
Of thought we have not plucked the fruit  
Until we do the deed.  
The Winnebagoes, Potawatomies,  
And other tribes through you will rise,  
For all the Reds and e'en some Whites deem  
    you  
To be the voice of the Great Spirit true;

You have been baiting long this trap,  
Let it be sprung before mishap.  
Besides, you have hatched out a scheme  
By which Fort Armstrong may be caught,  
Its head in cunning overraught;  
Let this no longer be a dream  
To play with as if fancy's fitful gleam.  
Such work I would not of you ask,  
Unless I gave myself a bolder task,  
Which I shall have to play in mask:  
I hasten to the volunteers  
Whose northward march our river nears,  
Among them I shall move disguised,  
Not in mulatto skin despised,  
But as a sunburnt farmer white  
Bringing his truck to soldiers there,  
And spying out how great their might,  
What doings they intend to dare—  
Eaves-dropping all about the coming fight,  
The rumors snaking through an army's air,  
Like a vast vat of eels a-wriggling,  
I'll hearken best just when I'm higgling.  
Perchance a hunter too I'll play,  
Trailing the game along the way,  
To sate the hunger of their camp,  
Till in my brain I bear its stamp."

White Cloud still in prophetic swing,  
Slapped on his knee and spake: "That is the  
thing.

Let each of us make such an offering;  
The Prophet I shall be and you the King,  
Of my large hope you see the traces,  
I am to be the priest of all the races,  
And then unite in one vast fellowship”—  
Broke Swartface in: “Enough of that,  
Let us now do it, pat—  
The sun is up, come, let us skip.”

## Canto Third.

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### *LINCOLN AT NEW SALEM.*

#### I.

New Salem had already heard—  
A farmer brought the welcome word—  
That Lincoln, tall New Salemite,  
Had gained at Richland his first fight,  
And had at once his march begun;  
He would reach home ere day be done,  
Perchance at nooning of the sun.  
The entire town turned out to see  
The Captain and his company,  
The feather in his cap to measure,  
And weigh in worth this new-trove treasure,  
As well as give the lad some pleasure.  
The cry soon rose: They come, they come!  
And at their head the big bass-drum  
Reverberated rumbling noise  
To the delight of all the boys,

Who bare-footed in a minnow drove  
Were shoaled about the music they did love,  
And patted tempo to the strain,  
Wanting to hear it all again.  
The tip-top fifer, too, was there,  
Who trod the time with soldier air,  
Big Blowhard with his graying hair,  
High-headed fifer, old Tom Cunes,  
Who blew a battle in his tunes;  
Striding along in steady stalk,  
He always made his whistle talk;  
And though he had to blow uphill,  
He led his charging sounds at will;  
Though steep the path he had to climb,  
He took the fortress every time.  
Now at his very best he blew,  
His hat he nodded off his head,  
His broad-brimmed hat of straw just new,  
It fell down where he had to tread,  
He kicked it out aside the road  
And onward still uphill he strode,  
The peopled top-knot of New Salem  
In hurrahing chorus there did hail him.  
His silver shock of hair bouned round his  
poll,  
Which to his step bobbed up and down;  
While out his fife the martial notes did roll  
And to the music marched the town,  
Whose festal head was decked with rosy  
crown.

Old Tom had fife'd for General Harrison,  
For Croghan in Sandusky garrison,  
Against the Reds and British too;  
He fifeing fought at Tippecanoe,  
And blew to beat Tecumseh's brother,  
The prophet twin of the one mother.  
There he this same Black Hawk had seen,  
At whom he shrilled his whistle keen,  
Which louder buzzed than whizzing musket  
    ball,  
And pierced the cannon's roar with battle call,  
Shooting the smoke of powder through and  
    through  
With furious blast of Yankee-doodle-doo.  
Nor was in battle Tom a cipher,  
All famed him as the fighting fifer,  
For when his fife was shattered by a bullet,  
He took a trigger and oft did pull it;  
The splinters of his pipe he threw away,  
But kept the mouthpiece to this day;  
Now through that leaden hole he blows  
    While to and fro his noddle goes.  
The hollow nib he presses with his lips,  
And up and down he plays his finger tips  
Over the vents of his sideling fife,  
Into whose notes he puffs his very life  
Steeling the heart with passion grim,  
Or thrilling it with a lofty hymn;  
So at the head of Lincoln's jocund band,  
He fife's up "Hail Columbia, Happy Land."

Two sets of men were by him hated,  
The British and the Reds he mated  
In his long memory of wrath,  
For what they wrought of wrongful scath  
Unto his folk of the frontier;  
The fifer too was pioneer,  
But now it was Black Hawk alone,  
Whom he in Canada had known  
At the Thames' battle where Tecumseh died;  
Black Hawk ran from the chieftain's side,  
Skulking away he sneaked through forests  
back,  
“With our regiment,” said Tom, “hot on his  
track,  
Till in his prairie hole he slunk,  
And there he stunk us out, the skunk.”  
Blunt Tom could blurt as well as blow,  
His mind he let the people know,  
Who would sing back his vengeful note,  
And merciless would cut a race's throat.  
He held aloft his instrument  
Batoning with it his intent:  
“Abe Lincoln, I shall go with you,  
And blow the boys the battle through—  
Blow the last note of my old life,  
And breathe my dying breath through this  
dear fife.  
I have to tell the tale in every talk  
Of the red devil and his tomahawk  
Lifted against the border all my youth,

The lying Indian never told the truth;  
Could I but help you gain your goal,  
I fain would whistle out my soul,  
And then my ghastly ghost would fife as well  
Against that red-skinned Splayfoot down in  
Hell.

An Indian is old Nick, I know,  
To fife him out I'd go below.”  
But Abe spoke quickly up, “No, no!  
We do not want him too up here,  
Just let him stay down there, so so,  
He would be sure to volunteer,  
So many friends he has, I fear,  
He might be chosen captain in my place,  
I know that he would make the race;  
The Devil, even though he scoff us,  
Is always ready for an office.”  
No answer Tom made with his tongue,  
Perchance he was a little stung.  
He gave his fife a sudden tip,  
And raised it to his puckered lip,  
When all at once he made it scream  
The infernal tune of “Devil’s Dream.”  
Then Tom his hollow stick caressed  
As if it were a baby blest,  
And that dull leaden nib he kissed,  
Which his fond lips had never missed;  
Then all the people shouted glory,  
For he had told each man’s own story,  
Which tingled every borderer

Until each blood-drop ran to war.  
That time the Indian had no friend  
On the frontier from end to end,  
His doomed day none dared to fend.

And yet to be excepted was one man  
Who silent slid about the crowd to scan,  
As if he came from the other side  
So airily his step would glide  
Within and out the throbbing throng  
To which he could not quite belong;  
He held aloof, but not in hate,  
He seemed to be a child of fate,  
Some took him as a loafer lazy,  
And many said he was half crazy,  
Though not unknown, he was a stranger,  
Along the whole frontier a ranger,  
Flitting between the white and red,  
No blood he could be brought to shed,  
He would not kill a snake or toad  
E'en if it lay upon his road,  
And though his garments looked forlorn,  
His eye benignant traced no scorn;  
He skirted round the cheering crowd,  
Said naught e'en to himself aloud,  
But in his lank low-furrowed face  
No harbour held the hate of race.  
Within that town he turned a dream  
Drowned in the roll of drum and fife;  
Yet of some other world a gleam

He glanced beyond the present strife.  
On Lincoln he a look of hope would dart,  
As if he sought to ray it to the heart  
Of that one chosen man  
And all its worth to him impart  
As bearer of a mightier plan;  
The Captain caught the glance at last,  
And recognized it well;  
But then it was already past,  
And spent the spirit's spell;  
It ran into the ready air,  
No one could tell exactly where.

## II.

Meanwhile into New Salem's center  
The jolly joking soldiers enter,  
Each of them plays his little pranks,  
Or quips the crowd out of the ranks;  
The girls too trip in step along  
Each had a lover in the throng,  
Some showed a welling tear in the eye,  
They wanted both to laugh and cry.  
"Halt," shouted Lincoln to his band.  
Each move of him gave the command,  
The soldier boys came to a stand.  
The village life flowed to one place,  
It was the little squared space  
Where stood the tavern just one-storied,  
Which in its fragrant fire-place gloried,  
Where steamed the turkey and the pheasant

Wreathing the room with odours pleasant,  
And roasted pig with belly cloven  
Made music from the old Dutch oven.  
James Rutledge was the worthy host,  
Who well might of his lineage boast;  
A Rutledge signed the Declaration  
Which indeprended us a nation,  
A Rutledge signed the Constitution  
Which voiced to us our Government,  
In lofty words from Heaven sent,  
Of History's node the last solution.  
High up to hold Astræa's beam,  
A Rutledge was first Judge Supreme  
Of these so young United States,  
Appointed by George Washington  
To balance justice 'gainst the fates  
Which had the nations hitherto undone.  
Such lofty-lined ancestry  
Lay hidden in that hostelry,  
Which, perched aloft upon a hill,  
Looked downward at a little mill,  
Whose wheel was rumbling with the spill  
Of water pouring it upon  
Out of the singing Sangamon;  
The Rutledge mill had too its fame,  
And meekly bore its mighty name,  
A dam held up the stream, small-sized,  
Which too our Lincoln has immortalized,  
When once he made his laden boat  
In triumph over the fall to float.

But look above at the quadrangle!  
The crowd is surging in a tangle;  
Into their midst a cart is whirled,  
And on it see a flag unfurled!  
Lincoln stands there and peeps around,  
Not altogether satisfied  
Until a maiden's face is found,  
And at the tavern's window spied—  
The fact will never be denied.  
Then through his shape there throbs a thrill  
So tense it seems a heated chill;  
Suddenly his wan and weazen face  
Ran full of blood in a red race  
Through every furrow of its skin,  
He scarce could hold himself within,  
So fierce it fought there to get out and fly—  
I think you know the reason why.

Hark! Who has mounted on the cart  
And of the speaking makes a start?  
The schoolmaster of the perched village,  
The sower of its mental tillage;  
The crop grew fair in his deft hands,  
Though stony sometimes were the lands;  
He wielded well the tongue and pen,  
For long in use they both had been,  
Graham his name, his forename Mentor,  
Of all the brains in town the center;  
Nor did he fail to use the gad  
When once the boys had made him mad;

And e'en a naughty girl would twitch  
Her hand aback beneath his switch,  
While facial muscles twisted in reply  
Until a stubborn tear would globe the eye.  
But pupils liked him all the more  
For flogging into them his learned store,  
Which was not small and yet not great;  
It seems he did not graduate,  
Though he had been a while at College  
Where he picked up some classic knowledge  
Of that fair storied time of antique date—  
That fascinating fateless world of fate.  
Indeed he had been long a roamer  
Herein he too was like old Homer.  
Greek fables of the Gods he knew,  
And he could tell of heroes too—  
The wooden horse in tale of Troy,  
That was his everlasting joy,  
Which to impart to others there  
Did seem to be his heart's sweet care,  
Until the story showed the wear.  
Sing it he would if in the mood,  
Lilting off-hand in measure rude,  
Upon the step would take his perch,  
Twirling in hand a little birch  
In sign perchance of his high calling,  
And to his Muse the folk entralling.

But here upon the cart he springs,  
His birch is changed into a flag

Which now he flaps around zigzag,  
And thus a sort of speech he sings,  
About like that which I am making here,  
Falling in ups and downs across the ear:  
“Abe Lincoln, I believe in thee—  
Keep firm thy step with destiny;  
Thou hast a spirit to aspire,  
’Tis in thee to be mounting higher,  
I saw thee take the stranded boat  
Over yonder dam and make it float  
In safety down the troubled stream;  
A Captain then thou wert I deem,  
And of a far-off future gav’st a gleam.  
In thee I saw heroic mould  
Slipped through to us from ages old,  
Whereof the world-long songs have told.  
A Captain now thou hast to be,  
Nor is it thy last Captaincy,  
When of this fight thou mayst be free.  
A pilot of the ship of State,  
When in the very pinch of fate  
It rolls unsteady in the storm—  
Methinks I see thy stalwart form.  
But now this flag I wave to thee,  
And give it to thy company  
That they beneath its wavy blessings fight,  
And in its stars see shining God’s own light  
Until the niggard Death  
Refuses them more breath.  
Whoever be the foe in sight

He is now red—he may be white—  
On land or sea—abroad, at home—  
All will reply: Just let him come!  
Whatever be the war,  
It may be near or far,  
This banner be your consecration  
Now and forever to preserve the Nation.”  
“Amen!” they in response cried out,  
“Amen,” was Lincoln’s thunder shout,  
Resounding over all the rest,  
Though each had yelled his very best.  
It seemed to echo through the West  
Where prairies still keep the reverberation  
Rolling in answer to the Nation.  
Then Lincoln took the flag in his own hand—  
Flag of the worthy pedagogue  
Whose soul felt a prophetic jog—  
Long arms outspreading it above his band,  
He looked as if he waved it over all the land.

The village inn they stood before,  
A person now stepped out its door,  
And raised his finger at the crowd,  
In bearing dignified, not proud,  
To signal not to talk so loud,  
As he had something there to say  
Fre Lincoln start upon his way.  
It was James Rutledge, the first citizen  
He would be called by all those men,  
His neighbors of the blooming town,

Who gave to him of civic worth the crown.  
Lofty and lordly in his stature,  
He looked nobility of nature;  
Of South Carolina he was a son,  
But quit that State for a Northwestern one,  
For he forefelt the future storm,  
It was already there a little warm.  
The Southern gentleman he did appear,  
Retained the mien of the cavalier,  
Though living on the wild frontier;  
He took delight in his degree,  
And loved his genealogy.  
Now in his hand he bore a sword  
With guarded hilt and baldric fine,  
Burnished afresh and made to shine,  
Holding it up he spoke a word  
To Lincoln, yet by all was heard:

“I know you for a noble youth,  
Honor is yours and also truth,  
The virtues of a valiant knight  
Belong to you by own birthright.  
This sword of my great ancestor  
Worn in the Revolutionary War—  
I deem thee worthy it to wear,  
Since I no longer can it bear,  
As did I twenty years ago,  
To fight the Red and British foe  
With aged Shelby’s cavalrymen,  
Defying river, wood and fen;

In fair Kentucky lived I then.  
But now I love my Illinois,  
Its prairie free is my first joy—  
And may it be  
Forever free!  
Come daughter, gird it on this youth  
To wield for honor and for truth;  
Lincoln, ascend upon this stand,  
And knighted be by lady's hand!"

The lucky fellow forward strode,  
In every drop of blood he glowed,  
At once his face's fiery flushes  
Bespoke his heart's volcanic gushes;  
The fairest maid of all the land  
Was to engird him with a brand,  
Affixing it with her own hand—  
The flower of all gentleness  
And daughter of the Rutledges.  
In troth a knightly virtue third,  
Besides the two of which we've heard,  
Begins to bud in Lincoln's heart,  
And makes it from its chambers start,  
Until the twain is felt as one,  
By maiden is this magic done!  
A virtue new rays out upon her  
From him, as well as truth and honor,  
And seems to join them from above,  
That knightly virtue third is—love.

## III.

Ann Rutledge then stepped to the front  
With gracious look as was her wont,  
From father's grip the sword she grasped,  
Its belt round Lincoln's waist she clasped  
Before the applauding multitude  
Who there on eager tiptoe stood;  
And then the rosy daring maid  
Drew from its sheath the gleaming blade;  
She flashed it before that little band  
As if they were the entire land,  
And read on it: "Man is born free,"  
With voice of sweetest melody  
Jeweled by gentle courtesy.  
She placed it then in Lincoln's hand  
And every eye-shot of him scanned;  
His brawny knuckles clutched the hilt,  
He rose aloft as man new-built,  
Before whom Fear itself would wilt;  
The blade he brandished back and forth,  
He fiercely shook it toward the North  
Where Black Hawk was supposed to be  
Burning and slaying in savage glee.  
Then all that band of soldiery  
Their flintlocks pointed that same way,  
As if they saw the Indians in a fray,  
Whom they would start at once to slay,  
While two or three excited ones  
Shot off into the clouds their guns  
At the red specters of the air,

Now haunting in their eyesight everywhere.  
But Lincoln by some thought was stopped,  
His arm he for a moment dropped,  
Then raised again that written sword—  
The sword of the old Rutledges  
Who with it braved the stormiest stress—  
He glanced at its engraven word,  
“*Man is born free—*  
How can that be?”  
Suddenly he whirled about,  
Southward his eye looked sharply out,  
As if he sought a little speck to see  
Which on the far horizon there might be;  
The people wondered at his close inspection,  
And turned their faces in that same direction,  
When up he whisked his sword again  
And smote the wind with might and main;  
In both his hands he took the blade,  
And e’en a lurch south-east he made  
As if he sought a foe to smite  
In the hottest sort of fight.  
What image sees he on the air?  
Surely no Indian stands out there;  
All wheeled around in order to descry  
What seemed to threaten Lincoln’s eye  
Upon that part of sky.  
But naught they saw, and more than ever won-  
dered,  
When out the crowd a voice like Stentor’s  
thundered:

“Shake it again and do it double;  
Shake it at Calhoun who made the trouble!”  
Then all the men in chorus cried,  
Into one shout now unified  
Which swelled up to a universal will—  
Even the women could not keep still:  
“Shake it again and then once more!”  
That shout the very welkin tore  
To streaming shreds of far-off roar:  
“At South Carolina strike a blow,  
What was your meaning now we know.”  
Then Lincoln gave a fiercer lunge,  
As if from platform he might plunge  
Afar into some future Ocean,  
Whereof he caught a dreamy notion;  
He stood erect yet held the sword,  
Sword of the Rutledges, the same  
Which once from South Carolina came;  
Full solemnly he spoke a word:  
“If it should ever happen, the great defection,  
We'll have to march in the other direction.  
God save our band from such a task!  
And yet my mind bids me to ask  
Have you already that intent  
If called for by the President?”  
The thunder voice again upwent,  
As if from one big windpipe sent  
Up to the top tip of the firmament:  
“We'll go, and Lincoln shall the Captain be,  
The only man for Captaincy!”

“That point we need not yet decide,  
I hope we never may,”  
The Captain modestly replied:  
“But let us not forget to-day;  
Another duty we have now to do,  
That is what first we must get through,  
Though we are made of the best stuff,  
One war at a time—that is enough.”

So Lincoln shook at Carolina proud  
That Revolutionary sword,  
And sharped its point with the right word,  
Whereat the overflowing crowd  
Applauded to the dome the act  
Which seemed a forecast of the fact.  
The waves of sound rolled heaven-high,  
And with it rose the people up the sky,  
Who soon would sink into a silent vale  
Between the surges of the soulful gale.  
Then next that shoutless moment’s chasm  
Burst up with new enthusiasm.

But see! James Rutledge stands once more  
Upon the platform at his door,  
He seems more lofty in his whole being,  
His eyes flash sparkles in their seeing,  
A crimson burns along his cheeks  
As he in prophet’s rapture speaks:  
“The sword of the great Rutledges  
With all its bright appendages—

More noble than Excalibar  
Which shone as Arthur's very star,  
And cut his way in every war;  
Mightier than Durandal,  
The most romantic sword of all,  
Which Roland bore with Charlemain,  
Cleaving the Pyrenees atwain;  
Sword of the rending Revolution,  
Sword of the healing Constitution—  
The Rutledge name is writ on both  
With a sword's point, backed by God's oath.  
Now, Lincoln, thou art girded with the same  
And thou wilt give it a still higher fame,  
Wilt make it gleam with a far greater glory  
Than all the fabled swords of knightly story.”  
So said the Rutledge of the West  
Who always did his patriotic best;  
His dignity had not a flaw,  
His chivalry obeyed the law  
Disdaining all unchecked defiance,  
His character was writ reliance.

But now he could hurrah with zest  
And let a laugh loose with the rest,  
Could e'en unlock a little jest.  
But aye the daughter, rosy Ann,  
She was the one for whom each man,  
And woman too, not jealousied,  
His own dear self in love outran,  
Whatever way she was espied.

All had her chosen, there was no doubt,  
The secret everywhere came out,  
But whom the maiden fair would choose,  
All still were looking for the news.  
She seemed at Lincoln not affrighted,  
But with his warlike trappings quite delighted  
And on the hero smiled whom she had  
knighted.

But here comes Uncle Jimmy Short  
With smileful easy-going port,  
Of man he looked the generous sort;  
He sat upon his horse so globular  
That he did seem to roll along its back  
As he leaped down without a jar,  
And held it prancing in its track.  
A farmer living some miles out  
Was Uncle Jimmy when at home;  
And now from Sand Ridge he had come,  
As soon as he had heard about  
Lincoln's good luck, and brought a steed  
Saddled and bridled just to Abe's need.  
“Here, lad,” he cried, “take my best nag,  
I shall not of his mettle brag,  
But backed on him you will not lag.  
At sight of you bay Speedwell prances,  
And neighs to take with you the chances  
Of the curst redskin's ruthless rifle,  
His horse-talk fierce you cannot stifle.  
Captain, now leap into this saddle

To show how you may look a-straddle;  
I want to see your long thin shanks  
Dangle far down the horse's flanks,  
And when you grip in hand his bridle,  
You must not think of being idle;  
Your foot doth bulk a little bit,  
But in this stirrup it will fit.

See the dear fellow's rolling mane!  
There! he whinnies for you once again;  
Now mount! let's see how well you sit,  
And what boy Speedwell says to it;  
He'll make a war-speech, I'll bet a dollar,  
Hark! already he begins to holler."  
Then Lincoln's look did kindly bend  
And speak unto his all-round friend:  
"Dear Uncle Jimmy, some voice you heeded  
Which told you just what I most needed;  
But wait! I have aught first to do,  
One minute more I shall be through."

Lincoln had glimpsed a furrowed face  
Which gleamed across that crowded space,  
And thence beshone him with its grace  
Of pure maternal sheen,  
Transfigured like to Heaven's queen.  
Who is it gently pushing through the street  
Centerwards, where her idol she would meet?  
Ah Mother Sallie Lincoln hastes to greet  
The youth she loves as her salvation,  
Although a step-child is the relation

Between the mother and the son—  
Two souls transmuted into one,  
A kinship deeper than of blood  
Inspires her holy motherhood.  
A little gift she also bears,  
And holds it out with trickling tears :  
A pair of stockings she has knitted,  
'Twas all her poverty permitted,  
The yarn with her own hand she spun  
On spindle of her spinning wheel,  
And then she wound it on her reel,  
From sun-up to the setting sun,  
Until her happy-making work was done.  
With every turn of her deft fingers  
Over the lad her feeling lingers,  
Every loup had in it a good thought  
As she with knitting-needle wrought;  
Sometimes she would a stitch let drop,  
Or e'en in meditation stop ;  
Nay, she would fall asleep and dream  
What might his coming life beseem,  
And of it caught she many a gleam  
Escaping from Time's formless deep,  
Despite the Future's bolted keep.

From Little Goose Neck Prairie all the way  
She came, arriving just that day  
In time to see the triumph of her boy,  
Which made her heart walls thump with joy.  
And yet her hope had one alloy,

She felt some lurking counterstroke  
Whose pang anxiety awoke,  
Starting a far presentiment  
Which she could never quite prevent  
Despite her intellect's dissent.  
And as her work she handed fearful  
She spake to him in accents tearful:  
"I do not like to see you go to war,  
My Abe, my spirit's son,  
Your life in mine is spun;  
A cloud is hung across your star  
Just where it shines above  
With everybody's love.  
My heart bespeaks some day you will be slain,  
I feel a bullet crashing through your brain,  
Oft have you said to me the same,  
Presaging it as an ancestral trait;  
Your father's father had that fate,  
From whom you take your name,  
And also take your doom  
Which sends you to the tomb;  
The image of that little drop of lead  
How much it makes me dread!  
That time may still be far away  
Or yet to-day;  
Farewell I must endure the pain—  
Abe I may never see again."  
With one embrace she turned aside  
Her tear-wet face to hide;  
To soothe her sorrow Lincoln sought

And playful gave to her this thought,  
“Nay, mother, I am good for many years,  
Of flesh and blood I am still made,  
I do not look much like a shade,  
Here on your apron dry your tears.”  
And yet she touched with her dread word  
In Lincoln’s soul a quivering chord,  
Responsive to his deep foreboding bent:  
But now another task was sent;  
A mutual smile each smiled at any rate,  
Though both forefelt the stir of fate,  
And both seemed minded in a common tether  
So that they always thought together.

## IV.

But now the twain of single soul  
The time will tear apart;  
Each must pursue a separate goal,  
Already they have made a start;  
The one has still to keep her home,  
The other in the world must roam.  
Between them surged the crowd  
With acclamations loud,  
Bringing the village rhymers too,  
Whom Lincoln also knew.  
“A new man for our company,”  
The shout arose in boisterous glee;  
“Here comes the merry man Jack Kelso,  
Of all the town he’s the good fellow!”  
Then spoke to Abe a single voice

Yelling above the buzzing noise:  
“Jack Kelso wishes to enlist,  
And bring along his jolly grist  
Of songs and ballads and old rhymes,  
Which will amuse us at odd times,  
And even ’twill console us dying  
If we can hear him versifying.  
The fiddle too he gaily brings,  
Can pour his soul into the strings,  
And to his tunes will make us dance  
Even our nags will have to prance.  
In all the West he is the champion spouter  
Of Shakespeare and of Bobbie Burns;  
Of Indians he will be the mighty router  
Shooting verses at them of all turns;  
And cunning lines he has of his own make,  
Which he will not forsake;  
Of love he knows the very tune,  
Some of us boys will need him soon.  
Now Captain Lincoln, him enroll  
As prairie poet on thy scroll,  
And fellowed deeply with thy soul.”  
“I’ll do it,” says Abe, “to round our plan  
He comes in time the very man;  
Our outfit now will be complete,  
The enemy we’ll gaily meet,  
And serve him with a grand defeat;  
And then to cap the glorious deed  
A song of triumph will be our meed.”  
So Lincoln spoke, the name inscribed,

Whereat the poet a swig of grog imbibed.  
For Jack's loved Muse had a Bacchic vein,  
And the corn-god too could inspire his strain.

But say, who was this happy Jack,  
Who had such strange melodious knack?  
The village vagabond he must be called,  
The Muses sweet had him enthralled,  
So that he could not work for bread,  
And hardly knew where he might rest his  
head;  
Yet him the people liked and fed,  
Though they despised him and his verses,  
And would sometimes hurl at him curses.  
Jack too had been a far-off roamer,  
American descendant of old Homer.  
Wanderer shiftless  
Made singer thriftless.  
Abe liked this entertaining Jack,  
Would slap him freely on the back,  
And grade his friendship by the thwack.  
Both loved along the sunny Sangamon to laze  
And pass in poetry their summer days;  
With hook and line Abe soon would find him  
louting,  
And start him on the bank to spouting  
The rhymes of the great bards well-known,  
And then he added verses of his own.  
To Captain Lincoln Jack drew near,  
And spoke to him that all might hear:

“Captain, I wish to take with you this walk,  
And spout Will Shakespeare at Black Hawk,  
If he does not give up, then in addition  
I have some other rhymed ammunition  
Which I can draw from out my pouch—  
In shooting versicles I am no slouch;  
You ought to know my talent well  
On you I oft have tried its spell;  
I feel you have for me been wishing,  
Again we shall now go a-fishing,  
And with my rhymes you cannot help but  
    catch  
Of savage redskins the whole batch.”

The Captain’s hand gave one huge reach,  
And clasped Jack Kelso for his speech;  
The soldiers all in chorus shouted,  
As Lincoln roared: “We never shall be routed  
By those infernal mullygrubs,  
Which give to life the hardest rubs;  
For Jack will put to flight the dumps,  
Which more than Indians give us thumps,  
When the campaign may drag on dreary,  
And with flat prairies we are weary,  
The shout will rise as if from night  
At peeping of the light:  
Here Kelso comes—now we are cheery.”  
Naught could the soldiers better please,  
Since Jack and Abe with tales and spouting  
    bees

Would make in camp some lively fun  
And start the heavy hour-glass on a run.  
Jack Kelso's name was then writ down;  
Of all the men who lived in town  
He was the one whom Abe was thinking over,  
And longing for a rhymer and a lover  
To calm the agitated heart  
With strains of soothing art,  
Which no one else was able to impart.

The roses white and red were sung with might  
In those old Shakespeare times,  
But now it is the redskin and the white  
Which must exploited be in rhymes;  
And so Jack Kelso hies him to the front  
With backwoods verses broad and blunt,  
And challenges Will Shakespeare's poem,  
As rhyming wrestler tries to throw him.

## V.

With this last man enlisted  
The company feels itself full-fisted,  
Till now there seemed some lack,  
The gap is filled by rhyming Jack.  
Who never fails to show his knack.  
Then all the soldiers start to say  
“Up, off—let us no longer stay,  
Though it be hard to break away.”  
The Captain gives the quick command,

At once they step—the entire band—  
And all New Salem marches after,  
Women and men with teary looks and laugh-  
ter.

Still old Tom Cunes strode at their head,  
Blowing his fife he stiffly stepped,  
Nodding his poll the time he kept  
With Captain Lincoln's tread,  
Who all the people led.

The fiery fifer fife himself so red  
That his fat jowl seemed gushing blood,  
Washing his face in crimson flood;  
Fifing his blast at big Black Hawk  
Aye but he made his whistle talk!

The drummer drummed his drum with all his  
might,  
His big-thewed arm he slung as in a fight,  
Whirling his drum-stick balled  
As if a log he mauled.

The people trod to that one sound,  
Their common footstep shook the ground,  
Reverberating everywhere around.

The little snare-drum snarled between  
Grumbling its rat-a-tat-a-teen,  
Pelting away in petty poher,  
As ever scolding its big drum brother  
In gnarly nasal drawl  
Which made the epidermis crawl.  
And so they strode that orchestra,  
With its triumphant artists three,

Making of sounds a mighty murderous play  
As if the Indians thence to slay,  
To which the people's hearts agree.  
The very dome of Heaven echoed aboon  
With Old Dan Tucker for a tune.  
This ended, Tom turned on his heel,  
But in the act against a wagon wheel  
He struck by chance and broke his darling  
fife—

That seemed to take away his life  
A moment, till again upright he stood,  
When he picked up the leaden nib still good.  
But where they passed the village bound,  
The Captain stopped and looked around;  
His stalwart arm he did upreach  
And then he made a little speech,  
Just at the grove of Hickory  
Still famed as Jackson's tree:  
“Here, O friends, we have to part,  
Although it wrenches every heart,  
Henceforth we must be going faster;  
Say your last prayer, my good Schoolmas-  
ter.”

Then Mentor Graham stood before the boys  
And throbbed a word in broken voice,  
He folded round his heart that flag,  
Caressing it, “Good-bye, old rag,  
More I cannot speechify,  
My eyes will not keep dry,  
I must not show to you the tears,

Which I have often trounced from you, my dears;

And more of that I still must do  
For sake of all those after you;  
And though I be not now in school,  
I shall not play the sentimental fool.”  
Whereat the apple in his throat  
Pushed up and blocked the gushing note,  
Just then he slipped off to one side  
And secretly his eyes he dried.

Next smiling Uncle Jimmy came  
Who always leveled up the same,  
In weal or woe, in bliss or bane,  
He never failed to light on top again;  
Spoke he, now fondling Speedwell’s mane:  
“Good-by, my favorite faithful nag,  
Follow bravely Lincoln and the flag,  
Bring him in safety back to our New Salem,  
With a grand jubilee again we’ll hail him.”

When Uncle Jimmy Short had spoken  
The Captain had no time his gratitude to token;  
The Rutledges were standing there—  
Just there before his look  
And every thought of his a captive took.  
The father with his lordly classic air,  
The daughter with the sunbeams tangled in  
her hair  
And rosebuds blushing in her face

Which dropped in every eye their grace,  
And shot in every heart a tiny shaft  
Of maiden love all innocent of craft,  
Whereof Abe Lincoln took the deepest draft.  
As soon as those two shapes he scanned,  
In hope his soaring spirit planned  
To draw that famed ancestral sword  
Which dangled dazzling at his side,  
As if it too felt some old pride  
In lofty Lincoln, its new lord,  
Who spoke to them a stalwart word:  
“This falchion’s edge unsheathe I now,  
By it I lip my holiest vow;  
This burning blade I deem a loan,  
Which I shall bring back to its own;  
When I return from my long ride  
You still shall see it gleaming at my side—  
Dear sword, thy sunbeams from on high  
Flash back their sparkles to mine eye;  
When I thy laughing face uncover,  
I feel myself, I swear, to be thy lover,  
Who shall be true to thee till death,  
Shall grip thee fond at my last breath.”  
Three cheers for the keen Rutledge sword!  
All took a shouting spell;  
Three cheers for Lincoln’s keener word!  
They bettered e’en their yell.  
Now blooming Ann, at what she heard,  
Seemed with some inner forecast stirred,  
As if in rivalry with that bright sword  
Her face its beaming treasures poured,

Until the day itself was all outshone,  
And on the earth had risen a new sun,  
Which never sets when it has once begun.

But who is this that, leaning on her cane,  
Doth interweave her voice into this strain  
Of tender thought, between the twain?  
A form beloved steps up again,  
Her mien has changed to looking merry,  
Hearken! she speaks! 'tis Mother Sally  
Of Little Goose Neck Prairie;  
Her furrowed cheeks run full of pleasure,  
Rainfalls of joy pour down their treasure,  
In glowing glances she seems to rally  
From that first dread presentiment;  
Illumed of look she tells her new content:  
"My Abe, you now may go to war,  
The cloud no longer veils your star,  
It peeps out at me like a child in play,  
And twinkles in my eye a laughing ray;  
You will come back this time, I see,  
The next time, ah! but let that be,  
And take the blessing of to-day.  
Thy love must go out to another,  
But thou shalt not forget thy mother;  
My darling boy, again good-bye,  
To thee I feel I shall be nigh,  
My cabin bedside I shall nightly knee,  
My prayer shall thy guardian angel be."  
With quivering lips the Captain fluttered,  
And though he tried to talk,

At every syllable his tongue would balk,  
Till gathering up himself he stoutly stuttered:  
“Forward, Company:—Good-bye”—

The pensive village folk turn back,  
The volunteers keep on their forward track,  
Streaming the road with gayety,  
Though they no longer home can see.  
But Lincoln dared just once look round,  
He saw a maiden glance upon the ground,  
Showing a redder-lidded eye  
As though she, if alone, would like to cry.

Oh, Lincoln, what means this deep unrest!  
Two loves are surging in thy breast,  
As thou dost stride along the road,  
Forefeeling what it may forebode;  
An inner war is thy new test,  
A double heart with double hest;  
One love thou hast, most tender, for thy  
mother,  
The other love is thine just for the other,  
Who stirs the fiercer farther quest  
And cannot let the future rest;  
For it will never leave thee—never—  
Its presence will now dwell with thine for-  
ever,  
Thy soul’s one guest has come to stay  
Until thy judgment day;  
And then—and then—  
Enough—Amen.

## Canto Fourth.

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*BLACK HAWK AND KEOKUK.*

### I.

“Yes, I am going back again  
To my forefathers’ graves,  
Which can be now seen only in the waves  
Which ripple the white man’s growing grain  
Along Rock River’s shore;  
They are already leveled o’er  
By plow and soon will be no more.  
Tribesmen, help me avenge that wrong!  
How many here will go along?”  
So spake in council bold Black Hawk  
Who hissed a serpent in his talk,  
A coiled poisonous rattlesnake,  
Ready ever a spring to make,  
And head with venomous fang to rear

Against the pale-faced pioneer.  
This council looked upon the Iowa  
Along whose banks the Sauks and Foxes lay  
Smoking their fated pipe of peace,  
Yet somehow troubled with their ease.  
Two tribes they were, well mated,  
Long had they been confederated,  
And showed that red men of the forest might  
In their own social forms unite,  
Renouncing their fierce tribal hate  
And founding e'en an Indian State,  
Which would them all associate.  
So the twin tribes, the Foxes and the Sauks,  
Have laid aside their tomahawks  
To wage a little war of talks.  
To council all the men had come,  
It was a glowering set and glum,  
They crouched in rows and all were mum,  
Excepting two big tongue-tips never dumb,  
Those of Black Hawk and Keokuk,  
Who spoke as if they were an Indian book.  
Again to rattle began Black Hawk  
Spraying on all his venom'd talk  
And brandishing his tonguey tomahawk:  
“The white skin may it be accursed!  
I hate it last, I hate it first;  
To me and mine it is the worst  
Of all the ills sent down by Manito,  
From his great sea of woe,  
As if our world to overthrow.

Till I, the red, shall redden it  
My warfare shall I never quit;  
That body in its gore I'll tan,  
And make it like an Indian,  
The white may then become a man.  
The color of his skin means ever battle  
Till one of us be dead;  
Which one shall hear the other's dying rat-  
tle?

I swear, it shall not be the red.  
I long to wash these silver faces  
In bubbling fountains of their blood,  
And end this conflict of the races  
By wiping out the hellish brood."

Just as he stopped his furious talk,  
He raised aloft his tomahawk  
And flung it forth with all his might  
Eastward, as if he sought to fight  
A foe in that direction lying,  
Whom thus he fiercely was defying,  
And at the act the warlike group  
Of redskins gave a mighty whoop,  
And sprang like panthers from their lair,  
Will on the war-path start just there.

Amid the tumult of that boist'rous band  
Gesturing silence with his hand,  
Uprose the Indian's greatest orator  
Who would divert his people from the war,  
Which meant destruction to them all,  
If they should follow Black Hawk's call

To face about and then turn back,  
Reversing their old westward track.  
He bore the name of Keokuk  
His speech was gifted with good-luck  
For all his folk when in distress,  
And every soul it seemed to bless.  
The red man's racial hate  
He tried to mitigate,  
He saw in it the brand of fate  
Upon each Indian of the land.  
So now he would Black Hawk withstand,  
And stay the vengeful hand  
Which would be certain to invoke  
Retribution on his folk.  
Of Indian wisdom he was the voice,  
Of all his race he rose the choice;  
Their greatest man was Keokuk,  
The sage whom Black Hawk could not brook,  
Envious from whisper of ambition,  
And opposite in disposition.  
Both tribes, the Foxes and the Sauks allied  
Made Keokuk their chief in pride,  
E'en if a party was dissatisfied—  
Black Hawk and those who took his side,  
Who now had roused the frenzied thrill  
Which coursed in every Indian's blood.  
But all were of a sudden still  
When Keokuk before them stood,  
He looked a moment far away,  
And then began to say:

“Hear the Great Spirit first,  
And to him pray  
Ere we are borne down to the worst  
And vanish from the day.  
His hand has led the white men here  
And makes them stronger every year;  
Their arms will slay us if we fight,  
Although we think we have the right;  
Oft have we tried to stop their way  
And always had the debt to pay;  
The one great fact we must deservy:  
Be it for us to live or die,  
The whites are here to stay,  
Until the Judgment day.”  
Sad was the voice of Keokuk,  
More grave became the chieftain’s look,  
He knew he had to touch a strain  
Which would to many friends give pain,  
But his dear people’s welfare stirred  
His heart to speak the fateful word:  
“We have to change our way of life,  
If we would ban the cause of strife  
Between the red man and the white:  
For us it is a losing fight  
And ever has been till to-day,  
To-morrow looks the self-same way.  
Our customs long ingrown we must undo,  
Else we shall not pull through;  
Methinks our very soul  
We must somehow unroll

And overwork it new;  
Like his our village we must make,  
Divide the land that each one take  
His portion, to be his alone,  
Which he will till and own.  
Methinks I see my Indian  
Becoming thus another man,  
Uprising till he builds a mighty State  
And so defies the blow of Fate.”

So spake Chief Keokuk the sage,  
The wisest red man of his age;  
He hoped to save his dying race  
By bringing them to take their place  
In the new order of the world,  
And not beneath its wheels be whirled.  
Alas! his wisdom soared above his tribe,  
They could not grasp his lofty word,  
Although its sounds they heard,  
Its meaning they could not imbibe.  
They were unable from their birth  
To see what swept them off the earth,  
They could not change their institution  
Without an instant dissolution;  
He voiced the hest of the Great Spirit,  
But not a Redskin there could hear it,  
Gave but a grunt or mumble  
While Black Hawk’s band sneered out an  
ugly grumble.  
Sage Keokuk waved silence, being chief,

He knew the way to give relief  
To the upheaving savage heart,  
Through charm of Indian art;  
And so he called for a folk-tale,  
The wanderings o'er hill and dale  
Through which his tribe had had to roam,  
Ere they could reach their present home.

## II.

A woman was the keeper of this store,  
Long known as teller of her people's lore,  
Which she preserved well memorized  
Without the aid of print or letters civilized,  
And in it many a lesson brought  
To savage minds, not to be taught  
In any other school of man  
A little foreview of God's plan.  
That woman knew her Indians well,  
And could their soul's own story tell  
In their long fateful wandering,  
E'en could it in rude measures sing;  
She gave her head a little tilt,  
And to her words a swaying lilt:  
"Far up in Canada we Sauks once dwelt,  
When from above a push we felt,  
And that was long, ah! long ago,  
It is the first of us I know;  
From that far land, our earliest home,  
Westward the Sauks were forced to roam,

Fleeing the Whites, and Indians, too,  
Till countries vast we wandered through  
With all their swamps and running streams,  
And passed high mountains iced in sunny  
gleams;

Wandering ever, ever forth  
We crossed great lakes set in the North,  
Until we in Wisconsin landed,  
With kindred Foxes there we banded,  
And formed a single Indian nation,  
Staying the same in all migration.

In time we started on our way once more,  
Thence to the milder South we bore,  
And drove the Redskins all before.

Again we raised the furious battle-cry,  
We fought and slew the native Illini,  
So that of thousands now remain  
Scarcely a hundred to be slain.

Then on Rock River we made our nest  
Of wigwams where we took a rest  
From our long time of killing,  
Though not much Indian blood was left for  
spilling.

What we had done, we soon were made to  
feel:

For the Great Spirit paid us back  
Bringing these Whites upon our track,  
With whom we now must deal.

Before them we have had to leave  
Our latest dwelling place and best

And though our hearts did deeply grieve  
Again we had to move still further west,  
Over the royal River's haughty foam,  
Into our present quiet home.

So far the Great Spirit has now brought us  
And many a miracle has wrought us;  
But what our lot is hence to be  
Lies not within my soul to see,  
Or if it did, my tongue is not to tell;  
Still I must think all will be well  
If we but listen to our sage,  
Who says that rage must bleed for rage,  
Revenge's arrow will come back  
And level all upon its track  
Tapping at last the very heart  
Whence it did start.  
That is the Indian's danger.  
More than the white-faced stranger."

So spake the bronze-lipped poetess  
Who knew the story of her people's stress  
Through centuries of far migrations,  
In Oceanic undulations  
Westward across the continent,  
Till o'er the Mississippi sent  
Unto their present habitations;  
Her people's old recurring fate  
In heartfelt words she did narrate,  
That fated whirl of Indian despair  
Which Keokuk would stop by a new state

And thus a race's loss repair,  
At least its rapid rush would check  
From going all at once to wreck.  
But scarcely was the story ended  
And by the people's wiser half commended,  
When Black Hawk sprang his daggered  
speech,  
And for his weapon made a reach  
To brandish its defiance,  
As if to cut off all compliance.  
While his keen blade whizzed on the air  
His keener words hissed round him every-  
where:  
"That land of ours we never sold,  
It is the white man's lie now told  
By artful woman's tongue,  
Inspired by slippery Keokuk  
Who never would our rights uphold,  
But let our homes from us be wrung:  
Such truckling shall I never brook,  
I shall retake of ours what thieves once took.  
Yea, the Great Spirit's gift of lands  
Cannot by us be sold,  
Cannot be handled in our hands,  
And thus exchanged for gold.  
Who'll pick land up and carry it along?  
To no man singly it can belong,  
It is for all the tribe who use it,  
Not for the one who will abuse it.  
Never the red man shall divide the soil—

Breaking the good old Indian law—  
And o'er it stoop himself in toil,  
As if he were a white man or a squaw.”  
Whereat he turned aside to Keokuk  
And gave the sage a scornful look,  
Running its lines out to the nose’s tip  
Which in disdain did downward dip.  
Heaven-soaring went up the applause,  
And with it clamored too the squaws  
Who clung to the time-honored laws,  
Which made them dig the earth and hoe the  
maize,  
Chop the wood, the children bear and raise.  
She toiled for her big Indian all her life,  
And so she was his wife.

By such entire approval stirred  
Black Hawk dared break his boldest word:  
“To hunt our game and plant our corn  
We shall set out to-morrow morn;  
From our own native field and wood  
Hereafter we shall win our food,  
Despite the pale land-hungry thief,  
Whose ownership we shall make brief  
Unless by flight he gets relief.  
With its fair days has come the spring  
And bids the birds for us to sing,  
As underneath the leaves we roam,  
Going back to our old home.  
The Mississippi’s whirling flood

Let us repass and stay for good,  
That stream we should have never crossed  
This way, but held at any cost;  
Let us return, undo with gun  
What never ought to have been done;  
Our wives and children with us take,  
Our village then remake,  
Which we shall not forsake.  
Be ready, both ye tribal bands,  
The Foxes and the Sauks  
With whetted tomahawks  
From thieves to wrest our stolen lands,  
And with our twain the tribes afar  
We shall unite in one last war,  
Winnebagoes, Kickapoos,  
Potawatomies and all the Sioux;  
I see the Red Man's rising star  
When he a nation, too, will make,  
And will his own in might retake.  
I see our band of painted whoopers  
Scattering afar the blue-coat troopers,  
And tomahawking out their life—  
That is the end of mortal strife.  
With great Tecumseh once I stood,  
And saw him welter in his blood,  
And with his prophet-brother I shot true  
And felled my man at Tippecanoe;  
We shall make live our dying race,  
Or stamp our bloody trace  
Upon the earth's bewrinkled face.

Rise, then, and make a start, ye braves,  
Do not desert your fathers' graves."

All seemed to shout approval,  
None liked that last removal  
Which they would somehow wipe away,  
And so turn back their day,  
Undoing all their westward flight,  
Reversing e'en the sunset's light,  
As if it could wheel round in upward bent,  
And so remount the cycled firmament.  
But Keokuk then raised his wand  
To signify the chief's command  
That the wild tumult now must cease;  
He was the friend of peace,  
And his benignant look brought calm,  
Dropping in passion's wound its balm;  
Full well did Black Hawk know its power,  
To turn the soul to sweet from sour,  
And so he straightway strove to stem it,  
And by suspicion to condemn it;  
"Beware of Keokuk's soft soap  
Which washes out our only hope,  
And leaves us prey to sheer despair;  
And of his gentle looks beware,  
With these his weapons you must cope,  
In them is hidden sly his snare."

The chieftain looked a silent sneer,  
But let no wrath in act appear,

A word of wisdom would he teach,  
And sway the madness by his speech,  
He sought to soothe the seething hour,  
And lay his spell upon the demon's power,  
By gentle manner and oration,  
Instilling solacement and its salvation  
Into his frenzied nation.

“A few of our forefathers rest forever  
Beside this little Iowa river,  
Where now we hope to stay awhile  
Within our present peaceful domicile;  
The vernal sod now greens above them,  
It is our duty here to love them.  
And meed of memory to give  
That their example still may live.  
Methinks that sorely it would grieve them  
If we of our free will should leave them.  
Since the great treaty many years  
Have circled out and in,  
Beyond have borne our dearest kin,  
Bestrown us with their hopes and fears;  
Then I was young, but now am gray,  
So very long I shall not stay,  
But with my father yonder soon be laid away.  
Our old and young lie buried here,  
Why quit the tombs of those most near?  
Some of our sires of many moons ago,  
My own more distant blood, I know,  
Repose beside Rock River's flow.  
Thither my heart doth often yearn,

Fain would I see my fair birth-place,  
But life's hard lesson I have had to learn,  
It is the lesson of my race.  
That goodly land is ours no longer,  
To get it we would have to fight  
And conquer, too, the stronger,  
E'en if we have the right,  
Losing perchance what now we own,  
The very ground we stand upon;  
Then just one more enforced migration  
The funeral march will be of all our nation—  
With one exception, 'tis Black Hawk,  
The sole surviving Sauk."

So spake in trembling tones staid Keokuk,  
While his whole being with emotion shook.  
He seemed to hear his people gasping their  
last breath  
And then forever sink in death.  
But soon he gathered up his broken self  
again,  
And started in a calmer strain:  
"Why not for great-grandfathers' sakes  
Push farther back to the Great Lakes—  
Where once we had our dwelling place  
And stayed for years our westward pace?  
Where our most famous deed was done—  
Our double folk was wrought to one;  
Twinned together in death and life,  
We brought to end our tribal strife

With Indian's ill most rife;  
If all the Reds the same could do,  
A nation great they might be too.  
But, ah! that seems their wall of fate;  
Somehow they can't associate,  
And with each other form a State.  
But on the Lakes we were not ever  
E'en if we came thence to Rock River;  
We Sauks must go still farther back,  
Up the St. Lawrence winds our track,  
Till it be lost in twilight dim  
Amid the Northern ice-world grim,  
Or trails into the frost-fringed shores  
Where the Atlantic roars.  
If Black Hawk seeks ancestral graves  
Let him go on and on to where the ocean  
laves  
The fixed and bounded continent—  
Where he, I hope, will find content—  
And there he'll meet his British friend  
For whom he has so often fought,  
Who has him often bought;  
Who owns that distant land from end to end.  
There let him stay with his first ancestors,  
And in their tombs be laid,  
For which he has us long beprayed,  
And cease embroiling us in fatal wars.”

Whereat arose a wild ado,  
Two parties made the hullabaloo,

One side would hoot, the other cheer  
The leaders there who faced each other near,  
As if they might be ready for a tussle  
And test the worth of words by muscle.  
But Keokuk eyed down his foe,  
And stopped the broil by looking no.  
Division had set in again,  
Opposing views rent all atwain,  
Not tribal was the separation,  
Both tribes stayed one confederation.  
Keokuk was a Sauk,  
So also was Black Hawk,  
Of the same tribe each had the blood,  
Yet as born antitypes they stood.  
The one was happy when he fought,  
Sating his greed for human gore,  
The other's greatness was his thought,  
His bliss was when his folk he taught  
The treasure of his wisdom's store.  
Savage revenge he would abate,  
Well knowing it to be the Indian's fate;  
Black Hawk cried out in hate,  
“With gun and powder and whizzing lead,  
Let every white man now be bled  
Until his skin be dyed to red.”  
But Keokuk snapped up the talk  
And flung it stinging at the Hawk:  
“The very gun you shoot,  
Powder and ball to boot,  
From white man's brains you have to take;

Your weapons you can't make,  
And with his very knife  
You take his life.  
Not till his works you can produce  
Of fighting him there is no use.”

So spake the Indian sage  
Seeking to tame his people's rage,  
Which was their doom to death.  
Sadly he fetched his sighing breath,  
Till quiet was restored again  
When he continued in this vein:  
“Some words I still would like to say  
More solemn yet than any spoken,  
Which we can think about to-day,  
And muse what they betoken;  
Perchance in them we may foretell our fate,  
Unless we act before it is too late.  
The whites have pushed us on before,  
I like it not and would blame more  
If we to ours had not done worse,  
And on them wrought the greater curse.  
The red has been a foe to red,  
Black Hawk in his career has shed  
More of our Indian blood than white:  
Just that has been our greatest blight.  
Where are the mighty Illini?  
Their homes we took in war away,  
Some dozens only have been left to sigh,  
And wandering, die;

Their tribe is almost lost to-day,  
Their land it was which Black Hawk would  
now claim,  
And still among the Whites it bears their  
name;  
What you have done to others, has been done  
to you,  
Unless you stop this mill of fate, perish shall  
ye too."

Then rose mild Keokuk, the sage,  
Into a wise prophetic rage:  
"Where are the stout Kaskaskias,  
Bold Kickapoos and the Cahokias—  
Red men by red men slain?  
How can we cleanse that deadly stain?  
Swift is the law of our own deed,  
Its doom of us to-day we read  
Unless we stay its murderous speed.  
But why should I so far off roam?  
The best example have we here at home.  
Where is the red-skinned Iowa?  
Upon his soil we dwell to-day,  
Which we have seized and held with might  
Destroying him and his outright.  
Such is to me the damning fact;  
To us returns our very act,  
Though now the hand be white.  
So wave on wave of our red race  
Has rolled beyond and left no trace,  
Starting from distant Eastern ocean,

Westward has flowed its dying motion;  
Tribe after tribe has passed away,  
Their wheeled destiny makes no stay,  
And soon must turn our fatal day,  
Unless new character we take,  
And our ancestral ways forsake.  
We must transform the very earth,  
And make it picture our free will,  
Thus giving to ourselves fresh birth  
And with it higher human worth,  
E'en if our skin be coppery still,  
Not merely we the peace must keep  
With our white neighbors, then go to sleep;  
Our indolence and tribal strife  
We have to quit or give up life;  
This last advice and best  
Old Keokuk would give as his bequest:  
Each man must own his lot of soil  
And till it with his toil,  
Each must his former life undo  
And work it over through and through,  
Transforming it, strand by strand,  
Obedient to the time's command,  
Till all his character be new.  
I tell his lot, though this by him be hated:  
The red man civilized—or fated.”  
The prophet here in turn scowled down  
The universal frown,  
Which ignorance must always show  
To what it does not know.

## III.

Sage Keokuk was hardly understood  
By those who sprang of his own blood;  
His people he sought somehow to save,  
Though bent on digging their own grave  
And leaping into it outright  
Upon the field of battle with the white.  
The Indian idealist he was  
Who thought to change the deepest human  
laws  
By centuries of use inbred,  
Ere one brief life-time might be sped;  
The case he saw but not the cause,  
Not in a decade's speedy birth  
May be produced an æon's worth;  
And so the noble red-skinned dreamer  
Could never be his folks' redeemer.  
The mill of time turns not so fast  
To change the man of copper,  
The grain might otherwise not last,  
And dry would run the hopper  
Through which the world must always go on  
going;  
One grist is ground, another is a-growing.  
Ambition lofty soared with Keokuk,  
An Indian Prometheus,  
Who would the order old untruss,  
His race's God no more would brook,  
Would be the one red-skinned reformer,  
Of his red world the Titan stormer,

New-model it to his ideal  
Whose throbs he never failed to feel  
And in his speeches to reveal.  
Thus in a single generation  
He would remake the Indian nation,  
Though still his work would have to imitate  
The institutions of another race,  
And his own people's life displace  
With a new sort of State.  
But can they trained be to that transition,  
And dome the sky of Keokuk's ambition?

Soon Black Hawk seized the waiting word,  
He could no longer hear unheard,  
But to his rival fiercely turned  
While out his mouth his language burned:  
“Red-skinned destroyer of red skins,  
Art thou far more than I or any other,  
Thy words are reeking with all sins  
Against thy Indian brother;  
His very soul thou wouldest unking  
And leave his body but an empty thing.  
Of warriors thou wouldest make us squaws,  
To chop the wood, to plant the maize,  
Upsetting all our ancient laws,  
Compelling men their crops to raise,  
And so to get the white man's praise  
For industry and tillage—  
Which ends our Indian village.  
The children too we ought to bear

And with our milk the infants rear;  
The squaw herself will not consent  
That we usurp her part in life,  
She'll fight in order to prevent  
Her turning to a husband from a wife,  
And that will be new source of strife.  
As for myself, I say it here,  
And dare repeat it without fear,  
I'll never tomahawk a helpless tree.  
But a white body it must always be;  
I'll never sealp with hoe or plow, I swear,  
My good old mother Earth,  
But it will be Whiteface's tuft of hair  
Which I shall dangle at my girth."

Black Hawk thrilled the deepest chord  
Which swayed the soul of savages,  
Whose very dreams are ravages  
Responding to that fiercely spoken word  
Which they from furious tongue had heard.  
Even the squaws to shout began,  
They knew of Keokuk's plan  
And were against it, every heart,  
They clung in love to their own part  
Of the red woman's hard existence,  
With the woman's fond persistence  
In the transmitted custom of her lot.  
She asked not why or what,  
She took it as the best,  
For her the only test  
Of things called bad or good,

And so she always for it stood.  
Amid the people's noisy talk  
The orator was still Black Hawk,  
His weaponed tongue he would not sheathe,  
He slashed it out as long as he could breathe;  
But now he struck a soberer strain,  
Of argument he oped a vein  
Which showed him reasoning his plan,  
Though still in it the Indian:

“I say, that one ancestral strand  
Which scorns division of the land,  
The red man will retain forever,  
It from his life you cannot sever  
Without his final deep undoing,  
E'en though you call it his renewing.  
Let selfish whites each take a slice,  
And buy and sell it for a price;  
The earth belongs to the Great Spirit  
Who gave it to his children to inherit—  
To call their own what they can use,  
Or else it lose;  
Not it to break in little spots  
Which each may name his lots;  
Our soil cannot be bought or sold,  
So our traditions long have told.  
’Tis the Great Spirit’s stern command  
That we should now retake our land,  
In which our noble fathers sleep  
And which our duty is to keep;

As they to us have given it,  
So we to ours shall then the same transmit.”  
Applause more frantic and intense  
Greeted the speaker’s eloquence  
Than had before been ever heard  
Responding to his fiery word.  
He bared the Indians’ deepest sense,  
Illumed the limits of their consciousness,  
And tongued their fate’s last stress,  
’Gainst which they strove without defence.  
He spake their truest representative  
Of what they felt and wished and thought;  
And yet through him they could not live,  
In such a seesaw they were caught  
’Twixt could and ought  
Till they were ground to naught.  
Between Black Hawk and Keokuk  
They swayed with many a turn and crook;  
Between two worlds colliding madly  
They to death were dashing sadly;  
Two hostile institutions in a crash  
Crushed the poor mortal with their clash.  
Sage Keokuk well knew that war,  
For in him throbbed its mighty jar,  
And his cleft soul he scarce could shield  
Upon its inner battlefield;  
He felt the two-edged argument,  
And with it was his spirit rent;  
Still the red sage outsaw his race  
And sought to save it for a space,

Or one small fragment of the whole  
He would preserve by his control.  
Bravely he faced the noisy rabble  
And bade them leave their babble;  
And when had died away each mutter,  
His weighty thought he thus did utter:

“Of the Great Spirit is the word,  
Whose voice it seems Black Hawk alone has  
heard,  
Bidding us live as in the past,  
So shall our tribe forever last.  
But now the truth to you I have to say  
Two are the Great Spirits of this day,  
One is the white man’s, one is ours,  
But very different seem their powers;  
The one is greater, the other less,  
My heart doth writhe it to confess;  
Across the prairies and over the heights  
And on the clouds I see their fights,  
The one pursues, the other flees,  
Unstoppable by mountains, rivers, seas,  
Two hundred suns ago they say,  
This new Great Spirit sped this way  
Over the water from out the East,  
And hunted our Great Spirit like a beast,  
Who, huddling all his children red,  
Has o'er the Mississippi fled.  
My longing is to make a lasting peace  
That war between the two Great Spirits  
cease,

And ours, although the weaker one,  
The lowering day of death may shun,  
And save the remnant of his folk  
From the descending final stroke  
Of Fate's uplifted tomahawk.  
That blow we might betimes yet balk  
Were it not for this mad Black Hawk,  
Who thinks with his small band to carry  
through  
What all our race's greatest chieftains could  
not do,  
Philip, Tecumseh, Pontiae,  
All failed to turn the Whiteface back  
And hinder his Great Spirit's fight  
From putting ours to flight—  
I say we cannot meet his might.  
Not only these white skins we view  
Black Hawk will have us battle with anew,  
But their Great Spirit he will contest,  
And drive it off out of the West,  
But it will smite him to his fall  
Which must involve us, too—  
His ruin now hangs over all."

So Keokuk the sage has seen the rods  
Swish down in this new battle of the Gods,  
As it was fought to his deep-seeing eye  
Upon the earth and in the sky—  
Perchance a fable but no lie—  
Strangely retelling that old Greek tale,

Although he knew it not,  
Which Time can never stale  
But brings to bloom again on every spot.  
He did not say but well he knew  
His race must change its Great Spirit too,  
And take another deity,  
If of its doom it would get free—  
Who would with a new faith its evils cure,  
So that it could the conflict of the time endure.  
But Keokuk, the red idealist,  
Could not fetch up at once what ages  
missed—  
He could not pluck in a life-time's revolution  
The fruit of a millenial evolution.  
He sought to jump an entire rearward race  
Into the swiftest human forward pace;  
He dreamed himself Prometheus again  
Who shaped dead clay to living men,  
From whose electric finger tips the spark of  
mind  
Leaped to the brain of all mankind,  
And out the dullest earthly clod  
Came forth a being like a God.  
So Keokuk had the lofty goal:  
For that old Indian body a bran-new soul  
Without the touch of time to win;  
Alack! the red man could not slough his skin,  
And slip another person in.  
Nor could those great colliding Spirits twain,  
Who sought their worlds with power to main-  
tain,

Be pacified till one be slain.  
The multitude with shrinking dread,  
Had listened to what Keokuk had said,  
And ceased their noisy passionate crush,  
Feeling within their souls a sudden hush,  
As if a gleam had from beyond been sent  
Flashing the silence of presentiment.

## IV.

Then Black Hawk, not to be undone outright,  
Leads forth a man kept hitherto from sight,  
Whom he would now invoke as voice from  
heaven,  
Which not to hear would never be forgiven  
By the fierce Powers overhead,  
Until each Indian lay dead.  
A stranger through the crowd appeared to  
dodge,  
He slyly slipped from Black Hawk's near-by  
lodge,  
Where he had heard what had been said  
By Keokuk, who was the head  
Of both the tribes, the Fox and Sauk,  
Whom he would keep from war by peaceful  
talk,  
Revealing what lay in the time's design,  
How to avoid its stroke malign,  
And save the remnant of his race  
From the Great Spirit's own white face.  
But now behold Francesco Molinar again,

The dark-stoled Jesuit, born in Spain,  
Yet talking Indian on the border,  
Obeying still the general of his Order,  
Who from old Rome has sent command  
To his soldiers uniformed in every land,  
Of whom this Molinar was one,  
Daring to do whatever could be done  
To win the war in realms of sin  
For Church and State and Latin kin.  
That fierce old feud of savage circling years,  
The fountain of a century's tears,  
Between the Spanish kings and Netherlands,  
He bore within to Westerlands.  
In the Armada still he fought  
Upon the Mississippi's shore,  
The Saxon foe again he sought  
To conquer as of yore:  
Such conflict was his being's very core.  
That ancient European strife  
Between Teutonic North and Roman rule,  
In every blood-drop of him still was rife,  
Transplanted to this farthest Thule.  
The red men all he schemed to rally  
And drive the Saxon from the Valley,  
Or break the onward flow at least,  
And yet he only saw its speed increased.  
Louisiana's vast domain  
Had been the American's recent gain,  
Which he would somehow counteract—  
Undo the world's historic act

And turn it back to Spain  
Which it had quit some centuries ago,  
With damning frown of overthrow.  
The cosmic egg was getting addle,  
Still the Great Spirit's huge canoe  
He tried his best to paddle  
Up the time-stream, at its swiftest too ;  
Like Spain's topmost grandee,  
He looks Castilian dignity  
Now speaking at Black Hawk's behest ;  
There peeps the nature of his quest,  
As the white priest full loftily  
Dissects red Keokuk's theology :

“First a correction I would make  
Of what I deem a bad mistake,  
Which the last speaker did commit,  
Which if believed would send you to the pit.  
Just one Great Spirit rules both red and  
white,  
And loves them both, if he be thought aright,  
Not two of them, as Keokuk says ;  
To only one the wise man prays,  
That one is the Great Spirit good--  
One good—when he is truly understood.  
But a spirit bad there is, the Devil,  
Who has in man great power of evil,  
He is the foe of red and white,  
Of you and also me,  
Of all the world that we can see ;

With him I battle day and night  
In holy, never-ending fight.  
And now I wish to say a solemn fact,  
On which you soon will have to act:  
Yon Americans across the River  
Are of that Devil's darkest brood,  
From whom you must yourselves deliver  
With help of our Great Spirit good—  
From vampyres sucking Indian blood.  
If them ye drive out of the West,  
By the Good Spirit you will be blest  
As doing his most holy will,  
His promise then he shall fulfill.  
Him fighting on your side I see,  
And giving you the victory;  
Put down these wicked heretics  
With all their saucy, lying tricks,  
And cunning words, in which they revel,  
The spawn of that same ugly Devil.  
The true Great Spirit is unknown  
To philosophic Keokuk,  
But I stand near his very throne,  
And bask in his most gracious look;  
Him with you I along shall take,  
If you Black Hawk your leader make.  
Start now upon your new career  
Back toward the rising sun;  
No longer eye the setting one,  
Which you have faced this many a year  
Falling the hopeless tear.

And if your march leads you to death  
I shall be there at your last breath,  
Anointing you for Paradise straightway,  
Whose gates you shall pass through without  
delay,

And this drear life you there will never miss  
Fleeting angelic days in Heaven's bliss."

Such was the gospel now of Molinar,

Preaching the Indians into war

Likely to be their last,

If they the fatal die should cast;

Their savagery he deeply stirred

By favor of the Lord,

Their dying breath he e'en would bless

With promise of eternal happiness;

He prayed to do the will divine,

Which was his own sweet will,

And Paternoster's every line

With unctuous tone would fill,

But 'tween "thy will be done" and mine

He left a fluctuating gap,

Which it were hard to map,

And it remains unsettled still.

Quick Keokuk picks up the thread

Of flitting words; the philosophic Red

Against the sacerdotal White

Is pitted for a brainy fight,

And scarcely is a minute sped,

When that big Indian's phosphorescent head

In darkness strikes a dazzling light:

“This black-robed man has no control  
Over the white or red man’s soul;  
I question if he has the key  
Which can unlock futurity,  
And well I know he has no right  
To promise triumph in this fight.  
Why should we want his happy skies?  
We Indians have our own fair Paradise.  
And the Great Spirit of Americans  
Whom he calls Devil,  
Defeats him, thwarting all his cunning plans,  
And curses him with his own evil.  
He and his people once possessed  
All of these lands of the North-West,  
And all the valley to the sea;  
From mountain crest to mountain crest  
They claimed their own to be.  
Where are they now, O Molinar!  
You urge us here to that same war  
In which your people have been driven to the  
night,  
And still are keeping up their flight.  
Through Texas trembles now their throng,  
Will not stay there so very long  
If it be true what I have learned;  
Their faces have already turned  
Toward the Brazos and the Rio Grande;  
The new Great Spirit swoops that land,  
For your Great Spirit shows so weak—  
Weaker than ours—I dare it speak—

So weak as that of the Illini,  
To whom is scarcely left a babe to cry,  
So weak as that of the Iowas,  
Whom we upon this spot have slain,  
And seized their land as our own gain,  
From whose fresh graves shoots up our  
maize—

A deed not altogether to our praise.  
Down to St. Louis once I went  
Where the great treaty had been sent  
For us red men to sign—  
And Black Hawk's name is there with mine—  
Many a year has gone since then,  
I recollect the coming men,  
You smirch them the vile Saxon brood;  
I saw the going men, they were your blood,  
And sank your falling star,  
Francesco Molinar—  
You handed over all this western world  
To a young banner there unfurled,  
Streaming a rainbow of red and white and  
blue,  
On which the twinkling stars shone out to  
view,  
From heaven heralding a gospel new.  
Your aged flag then floated down the River  
Out of our sight forever,  
And to return this way—never,  
Till the westering sun wheel round his team,  
And the roaring Mississippi run up stream;

These new white men are they  
With whom we have to deal to-day  
And with them pray;  
We have to deal with their Great Spirit too,  
But not with yours and you;  
For yours, if I dare seem so bold,  
Is getting just a little old;  
But their Great Spirit shows far greater  
Than yours, e'en if he came much later,  
A harder hitter he, and hotter hater,  
If ever I again should have to fight  
To him my prayers I'd say each night.  
And for that war of good with evil,  
Or as you put it, of God with Devil,  
Why doesn't your God, if he be stronger,  
Kill Devil without delaying longer,  
And put an end to that long strife  
By taking simply one bad life—  
Skin off his scalp, though he should pray  
For mercy—that is our Indian way;  
The Devil's scalp, if I were you,  
O priestly Molinar,  
Would dangle from my belt for all to view  
As greatest trophy of my war.  
And so just ponder! for all time to run,  
My labor at one stroke were done.  
Then I would hurry back to Spain  
Whence I would never pop my poll again.”

Here Keokuk stopped suddenly  
And dropped his play of irony,

Sober, yea sad, he seemed,  
Some tears adown his furrowed features  
streamed,  
Yet love out of his glances gleamed :  
“I shall make peace in all my land,  
Enforcing it by just command,  
To win us that Great Spirit new  
With whom we have henceforth to do.  
I’ll get him for my people if I can,  
And friend be to that coming man,  
Who calls himself American.”

Great was the hubbub—in two parts  
The people stood with separated hearts ;  
The two sides shouting at each other,  
It seemed like brother fighting brother ;  
Party hate the village rending,  
A civil broil appeared impending,  
When Keokuk, the statesman chief,  
Grappled the crisis and bespoke his grief :  
“Alas ! I see we must divide—  
Let each man choose his side—  
It tears awain my heart  
Your going now apart ;  
On us the red man’s curse has lit,  
I see we cannot shun a split  
Though we shall have to pay for it.  
So hearken to my tears’ command :  
Let Black Hawk’s friends there with him  
stand ;  
But those who choose to stay with me,

May take their place at yonder tree.”  
Black Hawk leaped up and gave a whoop,  
Almost one half of the whole troop  
Stood with him there to be his braves  
Marching to take their father’s graves  
Across the Mississippi’s waves.  
Sage Keokuk stayed with the rest,  
Still doing what he deemed the best,  
Hoping that many might turn back  
When they had smelt the first attack.  
Soon Molinar brought up the rear,  
He could not quite conceal his fear  
That Satan must have ta’en a hand  
In splitting Black Hawk’s Indian band,  
And that a diabolie eloquence  
Inspired red Keokuk’s sense  
Wording it with forbidden power  
The saint to overtower.

The sun went down upon that little nation,  
But showed the red man’s separation;  
The tribal soul in two was rent  
And there could be no settlement.  
But Keokuk felt full his heart  
Seeing so many of his own depart;  
Against the Hawk he had no hate,  
Went to his foe as one held dear,  
Whom he would still conciliate  
And drawing with a whisper near,  
Prophetic spake that none could hear:

“Black Hawk, whatever you may think of me,  
Your friend I still shall prove to be;  
I know you will be coming back  
Ere many moons have arched their track  
Around yon domed blue;  
Now this I wish to say to you:  
E’en if a prisoner you be,  
I shall do all I can to set you free—  
Whatever you have done to me;  
I shall you not in wrath requite,  
But save you from your deed;  
Such is my present creed,  
Which I have learned from a wandered white  
Whom once I lodged and talked with over-  
night.  
So send to me when comes the need;  
Upon my help you may rely,  
Till then, good-bye.

## Canto Fifth.

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### *LINCOLN'S MARCH.*

#### I.

Forward the frolic soldiers fare  
Laughing and singing without a care;  
New Salem soon is out of sight,  
Yet over it a cloudlet bright  
Hangs sun-beshone up in the sky,  
And drops its glint in every eye  
Which glimpsing back with turned head  
Lets the foot trip in onward tread,  
Perchance a tear might now and then be shed.  
To Bardstown leads the road quite new,  
Marked by a muddy rut or two  
Of wagon wheels, and by the stamp  
Of horses' hoofs, to which the tramp  
Of human feet now adds its tracks  
Imprinted as on softest wax.

Over their way a cloud would lower—  
The needle lightning pricks their sight,  
Flashing its point e'en in the night,  
And makes their eyelids close and cower;  
The welkin sprays an April shower  
Into their startled faces just for fun.  
Next in his turn the merry-making sun  
Would pour down at a single glance  
Wide waterfalls of radiance  
Slanting athwart the fluffy cloud,  
And shedding sheen upon that crowd  
Responsive in a smiling dance  
O'er every line of countenance;  
While with his heat sent from above  
Sol dries their garments at his stove,  
And warms them with his love,  
Now from the prairie's outstretch free,  
As level as the surfaced sea,  
A flowering democracy  
Rainbows the land with variegated glee,  
A throng of all the floral races  
Begin to show their tinted faces;  
The whites, the yellows, and the reds,  
Uprise and nod their mottled heads  
In the caressing vernal breeze,  
With many radiant courtesies  
Unto the lines which march along,  
Saluting too the Captain strong,  
Who seems to be the very man  
The prairie longs for in its plan,

Hailing him in its grassy scroll  
The incarnation of its soul;  
It laughs as if it has a new life won,  
And folds in love its very son,  
Of all to be the greatest one  
Ever bred upon its even space;  
It mirrors him within its face  
The leveler of caste and race,  
And sees its own equality  
Rise up into humanity,  
Become a man incorporate  
Who puts its soul into the State.  
Oh wonderful the transformation—  
He seems to prairie all the Nation!  
The peaks along the Atlantic shore,  
No longer haughty as before  
In pride of the old families  
Which always claimed the topmost prize,  
Have tipped their heads a little lower,  
Above him they can hardly soar!  
The difference of East and West,  
Of mountain old and young prairie,  
He moulds into a union blest,  
Though they be still somewhat contrary—  
Joining of each what is the best  
In one great swirl of patriotic zest.  
Also the South as well as North  
Fails not to feel his prarial worth;  
For both anew he interlinks,  
Evening out their wayward kinks

Into one mighty equaled whole  
That all this people have one soul,  
The one abiding consecration,  
And may henceforth be called the Nation.

So Abraham Lincoln went his way,  
And many a thought leaped up that day  
Jumping into his brain and out,  
It was rainbow-colored rout  
Of happy hopeful fantasies,  
Which skipped around the sunlit skies  
In iridescent drolleries.

At that fine sword he often glanced,  
Which dangled at his side and danced  
In sympathetic jingles of enjoyment  
To find itself again in such employment,  
And to caress its long-shanked wearer,  
Worthy of its ancestral bearer.

From wreathed scabbard then he drew  
That fiery flashing blade anew,  
And sharply viewed it from near by,  
When the inscription caught his eye  
Which he had glimpsed before;  
*Man is born free*—so ran its lore,  
Once worded in the Declaration  
Signed by a former generation  
Of famous levelers,  
For whom his heart in speech upstirs:  
“A Rutledge too has there his name  
Upon the roll of everlasting fame—

Shall I ever do the same?"  
So Lincoln dreamed of his career.  
And yet the memory most dear,  
E'en calling up a tender tear,  
Hovered around the maiden's word  
As she him girded with this sword—  
Sword of the Rutledges now taken  
And at the country's foe reshaken.  
The hoary brand that Balmung hight  
And gleamed afar in old Tentonic night,  
Girding the champion Sigfrid bright  
As if he were the hero of the sun,  
Shall be by this new sword outshone  
When its heroic deed is done.

At every crossing of the roads  
The people flocked by wagon loads,  
Or thither tramped from near and far  
To see the soldiers go to war.  
The mother held her babe at breast,  
And loudly cheered with all the rest;  
Much she had heard the borderers talk,  
She feared the Indian's tomahawk,  
Which the mute suckling did not spare,  
Whose fate the mother too might share.  
Old sooty Satan with hoof and horn  
The backwoods rather held in scorn;  
They knew one overmastering evil,  
And named him the Red Devil!  
One article of faith they had,

And never failed to make it good—or bad—  
And for such faith their blood would shed:  
“The Indian good is Indian dead.”

Soon out the ranks a high-keyed voice  
Piped up a note of shrilly noise—  
It was one of the younger boys:  
“Captain, show off a little of your glory,  
And tell us now a roaring story.”  
Whereat another older throat  
Brayed out a louder, coarser note:  
“Abe, you can outspin the world in yarning,  
That is the nub of all your larning;  
Come, make us now a little speech,  
Somehow you cannot help but preach,  
Balloon yourself with some hot air  
Which you can make just anywhere,  
And hoist us up to cloudland fair.”  
Lincoln looked skyward at the word,  
And to a kind of prayer was stirred:  
“Behold the glory of the Lord!  
Above us bends his promised arch,  
Beneath whose radiance we'll march;  
A web of raindrops with a woof  
Of sunbeams forms our palace roof  
Woven into a rainbow's aureole,  
Upon high Heaven's stormful loom;  
It echoes to the boding soul  
A forecast of a double doom,  
A mishap tuned to hope and happiness,

A burn which blisters but to bless,  
A joy transfigured from distress.  
Most beautiful celestial wonder,  
Yet built on black infernal thunder,  
Thou hast unlinked the lightning's chain  
And Heaven freed to love again.”

So Lincoln told his most exalted vein,  
And far fore-felt his inner bent,  
The working of presentiment;  
And yet he had another outer strain.  
Down the full-flowing Sangamon  
The soldiery is marching on;  
The Captain halts them on its banks,  
And bids them break their easy ranks  
For one good look at that grand stream,  
Which wound in hope around each heart,  
From which they soon will have to part,  
Whose flood must yet be plowed by steam,  
Uniting with the world their county—  
And that all held their greatest future  
bounty.

Stretching his arms to their full reach,  
Lincoln could not hold back his throbbing  
speech,  
He made it echo as far as he was able:  
“The Sangamon is navigable!  
That is my creed's first text  
On which I'll preach this day and next,  
Nor can I well forget at any rate

I am a legislative candidate.”  
But when he had intoned this note  
He touched the thought which made him  
dote:

“Behold yon flood, will it not float  
A noble Mississippi boat?”  
All shouted low approval, for  
They wanted to believe their orator;  
One voice alone dared lisp a doubt:  
“To-morrow maybe ’twill run out.”  
Lincoln snapped up the word at once:  
“Upon a time there was a dunce,  
Who stood beside a mighty stream  
Which swept along the bank so fast  
He thought it must go dry at last,  
And so he waited in his dream  
Till he could step across at will;  
I hear that he is waiting still.”

That hoisted all their lungs to cheers,  
They jabbed the doubter with their jeers,  
When Abe again bespoke the volunteers:  
“Let us no more the future borrow,  
That loan we never can pay back,  
Until old Time runs off the track,  
I shall not wait here till to-morrow.  
Forward—march with the crest, my boys,  
The lofty crest of Sangamon,  
As it sweeps ever swirling on  
Until it pours into the Illinois

Which to the Mississippi flows—  
But not that way our journey goes,  
Here let my watery sermon close.''

So they their frothy streamlet followed  
Till it at one big gulp was swallowed  
By open mouth of a large river-god,  
Who bore it in his belly like pea in pod,  
And seething swam southwestward in a rage,  
But ever with a bigger swagger for his age.

The line of soldiers crawls again  
Across the flat-topped grassy plain;  
There on the prairie Time stands still  
And suns himself at his sweet will:  
He checks the hurry of his pace,  
For he has found his happy stopping place,  
As if he had reached the end of his long race;  
He drops his hour-glass by his side,  
And lets the universe just slide;  
His whetted scythe no more he holds,  
But lounges o'er the greenery's folds,  
So that the prairie seems to be  
Earth's visible eternity,  
Which now the spring has flecked with flow-  
ers

Whirling from Heaven in sunny showers  
Whose drops file down the sky-built arch  
Serried in a rainbow march.

Anon the troops come to a wooded plot,  
Quite rounded by a runnel was the spot,

As if it were a planted flower pot,  
In which the eye surprised could see  
The red-lipped blowth of the appletree,  
And wonder how that miracle could be.  
A little wood-nymph lives just there  
Who scents with fragrance all the air,  
Strewing the blossoms in her hair,  
And as she flits along her track  
She combs the curly sunshine down her back.  
Lincoln looked at the bloom and wondered,  
Its place from man so far was sundered;  
That perfume too stirred up another sense  
Far higher, nobler than its own,  
There came a sense of Providence  
To Lincoln on the breezes blown.

## II.

At last upon a bluff all stood,  
And watched the Mississippi's flood  
Crawl in the distance serpentine  
From out the North and through the South,  
Until it opes its many-throated mouth  
Belching itself into the brine.  
They see it form a double boundary line  
Between two States—a motley pair,  
Illinois here, Missouri there—  
One white, the other somewhat black;  
Both lie along the River's track,  
And through its windings in and out

They seem to wrestle round about  
Along its ever-roaring route.  
Though each was called of each the brother,  
Each rushed to grapple with the other,  
Though neither got the better,  
Each forged the other's fetter.

And as the Illinoisans gazed,  
They of a sudden were amazed  
To see a woman enter camp,  
A negress with her race's stamp,  
And yet not altogether so  
For she was mixed, half-black half-white,  
Dual like the Great River's flow,  
Two races she faced out to sight,  
Mulattoed in her very right;  
And on her back shawled up in state  
Peeped forth a picaninny's eurly pate.  
She had escaped beyond the border  
And crossed the stream without an order;  
She dared break through that double River  
Which prisoned her and hers forever—  
Double it was as her own birth,  
Still she resolved the bond to sever  
Asserting her sole human worth.  
Her husband had been gone for years—  
She punctuated words with tears—  
In the free North, she knew not where,  
To find him now was her chief care.  
And they would sell her only boy,

To make him free, that was her joy;  
She wished herself down in her grave,  
If she must mother him a slave.  
The soldiers on that April day  
Gathered around the runaway,  
Some shouted: "Send her back!  
She is her master's own, not ours,  
Return she must, by all the Powers!"  
That put the woman on the rack.  
She never would reverse her track  
Across that double River,  
But rather in its waves go to the Giver;  
A tear welled up out of her soul,  
And down her bronzed cheek did roll,  
Then on her chin it hung from tufted mole  
Where it would catch and glisten,  
As if it longed to listen.  
Then others said: "That will not do!  
It would to Heaven be untrue,  
Let her be free like me and you."

That company surged up divided  
And as the Mississippi, was two-sided,  
By this one slave the very brain  
Seemed of a sudden cleft in twain;  
Each part was getting ready for a tussle  
Which might come to the test of muscle;  
But Captain Lincoln stepped up to the front  
And drew his sword, as was his wont,  
Then on the spot he bade his band

To form in line at his command.  
Two sides among his folk he saw,  
Each having its own law,  
Two sides he felt within his breath  
Fighting each other to the death.  
The fugitive into his tent  
With stern behest he ordered sent,  
And then he spoke his fast intent:  
“Upon this case you are divided,  
By me it has to be decided,  
But not just now. I first must grow  
A little over night,  
That I may see what's right,  
Before I make the final throw.”  
Some hostile murmuring there was,  
But Lincoln dared uphold his cause,  
Asserting in himself the law of laws,  
And yet forefeeling in this little clash  
The fore-sent throb of a mightier crash  
Between the passing outer right  
And the rising inner light.

A smooth-chinned man in old drab suit  
Came into camp to sell some fruit,  
Potatoes too as well as meat,  
Whatever might be good to eat;  
His milk he sold unskimmed,  
His hat he wore broad-brimmed,  
He never failed to give good measure,  
And at the deed to show his pleasure;

Lincoln soon marked him and bethought:  
“Aye, just the man whom I have sought,  
The very man from hence to take her,  
A lordly conscienceed soul—a Quaker—  
Who never will in fear forsake her.  
Forefathers mine were Quakers too,  
In me there is a strain of that same view.”  
Whereat he spake unto the man,  
Concealing in deft words his plan:  
“Hurry and peddle out your truck.  
Another bargain must be struck,  
For which I wish us both alone  
That it be rightly done.”  
The meek disciple of George Fox  
Stared blank as if he were an ox,  
When Lincoln sobered his request  
Yet hid it in a long-faced jest:  
“Come to my tent when you are through  
That hat, good friend, I wish to buy of you,  
And e'en in war to wear it too.”

Then Abraham goes to his tent  
Alone, but in deep argument  
With his own soul upon this theme:  
“Am I awake, or do I dream?  
Is this world real, or does it seem?  
I feel embattled in my brain,  
Of principles two armies file  
And fire for many a blazing mile,  
Both sides are fighting might and main,

I know not how to stand the strain.  
I never was so tempest-tossed,  
If one side loses I am lost,  
The gain of either is my cost.  
Against the Reds my men agree,  
But this black skin splits unity;  
And as this camp, so too this State,  
So too this Nation separate,  
So too within myself the rent—  
And I in halves of self am hent.  
So 'tis inside me, so without,  
I scarcely know what I'm about,  
In me this camp, this State, this Nation  
Show one deep yawning separation.”  
Thus Lincoln brooded o'er his task,  
Nobody there he dared to ask  
What might his duty be in this decision,  
When all the world rasped in division,  
Too stifling 'twas, and out he went  
And strolled in thought around his tent  
Which now was the high firmament;  
The distant Mississippi's flood  
Seething he saw as there he stood,  
And felt it sympathetic with his mood,  
Pulsing his heart's own plentitude:

“You struggling Titan of a stream,  
In this same rift to me you seem—  
And my cleft soul is yours, I deem,  
You are half-free half-slave,

No wonder that you rave  
And wrestle with yourself in strife  
Which makes eternal war your life;  
The wild commotion in your breast,  
Responds to mine and gives no rest;  
Free here, but over yonder slave,  
The battle joins just in your wave,  
Both sides line up with furious clash,  
I see it in your spray and splash.  
What makes this turbid pother?  
This side resists the other,  
Forbidding any slave to go  
Back to his former world of woe.  
That tallies with my heart's command,  
By it I now shall take my stand,  
This woman I shall not send back  
E'en though the blood-hound scents her  
track;  
I shall in some way sneak her out  
Veiling her course in cloud of doubt.  
And yet I feel the counter stroke  
Which I within myself provoke,  
For I commit a violation  
Of the first law of the first Nation:  
That is to me a new damnation."  
So Lincoln swayed in agitation  
Worse than the Mississippi's seething—  
You could hear it in his breathing;  
He looked around as if for aid  
In that stern strife which two laws made,

Conflicting each with each  
And stamping on his heart their breach.

He saw the Quaker toward him glide  
And take a place just at his side,  
That presence was a comfort to his spirit,  
As if his own he did inherit—  
An inner voice—and he did hear it;  
It was already getting dark  
While to the man he whispered: “Hark!  
I fain would know just where you dwell;  
Describe your house that I can see it well  
So as to find it or its place re-tell;  
And let me hear your name  
For I may have to use the same.”  
The man obeyed the strange request,  
Just now it seemed what was the best;  
For Lincoln’s voice became the inner  
Whose hest the Quaker heard,  
Which if he scoffed, he was the sinner,  
And so he quickly spoke the word:  
“As Quaker Ellwood I am known  
To all the neighborhood around,  
That title has me wholly overgrown,  
Enwreathing me wherever I am found—  
I cannot get outside its sound.  
Upon this little creek I dwell,  
Which here you see to wander  
And pour into the River yonder.  
With ease my dwelling you can tell,

Six miles due east it comes to sight,  
A weather boarded house and painted white;  
The only one you can spy out  
In all that country thereabout.”  
“The place I see with inner eye,  
Could go to it if I should try;”  
So Lincoln spake his satisfaction,  
And then enjoined another action,  
Which would require a bit of guile  
From Quaker Ellwood for a while,  
And which to him was somewhat stunning,  
His conscience could not counterfeit in cun-  
ning,  
Though Lincoln’s outside seemed but fun-  
ning

As he drew down his crescent lips,  
And hung a joke on their nether tips:  
“Now to this sapling hitch your nags,  
And in your wagon spread your bags,  
I’ll send you home with a new load  
When night has covered all your road.”  
The sun had shot his final gleam  
The tired camp became a dream,  
Then Ellwood tickled up his team,  
And in his wagon bed there lay,  
Crouched on some tender tufts of hay,  
Two darkies speeding on their way;  
The mother and her picaninny fleeing,  
Not daring to be seen or seeing,  
All huddled in a heap of rags,  
Could not be told from farmer’s bags.

But Lincoln with himself was far from one—  
The stratagem in him begot no fun,  
But stabbed him inwardly with strife  
Which cut down to the center of his life:  
That he had violated law he knew;  
The very thought kept sawing him in two,  
Well had he read the Constitution,  
Against it now he turned his deed—  
This shook him like a fragile reed—  
He loved his country's institution,  
Which had become his being's deepest creed,  
But with him now it disagreed,  
And sent deep aching discords through his  
soul  
Which caused him all the night to coil and  
roll  
In furious agony,  
Of which there was no remedy  
To medicine him free.  
And so he wrestled with his trouble—  
The very Law in him turned double,  
Like the Mississippi's flood,  
Like that slave mother's blood—  
Two Laws were fighting in his heart,  
The combatants he could not part,  
But had to endure from each the blow;  
He felt of each the victory,  
And too of each the overthrow,  
All of himself was mutiny  
So fell at times he almost fainted;

But with the Furies he became acquainted  
The Furies of the age and yet his own,  
Which in himself he must put down  
And in his country too,  
Such is the deed he has to do,  
If with this trial he gets through.  
But for a while he had a spell,  
In which the differencee he could not tell  
Between himself and Hell.

## III.

The struggle lay in him and all his band,  
But he would flee from it to story-land,  
And take his company along,  
Till they and he forgot the throng  
Of far-away presentiment,  
Which seemed to come to them downsent  
Shadowing their souls with aught fore-  
meant.

For underneath the red man's battle  
Which could but make a little rattle,  
They felt a deeper, mightier strife,  
In which there was the fight for life.  
They marched quite silent till the sun  
Told from his tower that day was done;  
When they their evening meal had taken,  
They sat around as if forsaken,  
They could not cast away their gloom,  
But seemed to be awaiting doom,

When Lincoln loudly called, “Where’s  
Jack?

Now is the time to put him on the track,  
And start him up, with spur of praise,  
To trumpet one of Shakespeare’s plays,  
And make the mighty lines reverberate  
With the very roll of fate.—

Kelso, disclaimer tragical,  
I wish to hear of Caesar’s fall,  
Which once I heard thy thunder give  
That I did die with him, yet live;  
His murder I forefeel today  
Far more than then—I know not why—  
But that is nought—let’s have the play—  
I want to see great Caesar die.”

So Lincoln chooses that one part  
As if it would extract a dart  
Outletting his foreboding heart.  
Jack needed not two invitations;  
For he did love that play’s orations,  
Which suited Lincoln’s lowering mood,  
And fed his soul with pensive food.  
So Kelso mounted on a cart  
With Cassius’ speech he made a start;  
Conspiracy of lesser men  
Against the greatest one he then  
Set forth in word and act and mien,  
Treading alone that backwoods scene.  
But when they slew their mightiest hero,

And sought to make his work a zero  
In the grand stream of History,  
That crowd did answer with a cry:  
“The damned black-hearted traitors—spare  
none

Let me get at them with my gun.”  
Jack Kelso made all feel it, by his art—  
The dagger’s point in Caesar’s heart;  
One man sprang up and cocked his old fu-  
see

To shoot the specters of that tragedy;  
Then Lincoln fronted them to say  
Holding his hand aloft: “Enough today!  
Those spooks we have not now to slay,  
We soon may see a fleshier fray;  
Not with old Roman long since dead  
We war, but with the living Red.—  
My Jack well-done! our very breath  
We breathed out with Caesar’s death;  
Not yet has mine got back to me,  
I cannot speak so well, you see.

Hereafter we shall have the rest,  
And you must voice with all your zest  
The words of Shakespeare tragical  
Shaped in your action magical.

O Shakespeare, of men the doomless  
Thy folk alone seem ever tombless  
And thou thyself in time art dateless,  
Fate’s own revealer fateless.—  
But, Jack, tell in the next recital,

Of Caesar's murder the fierce requital,  
For all of us desire to see  
That the assassins punished be."

Within his tent then Lincoln slipped,  
His soul so deeply had been dipped,  
Into the blood of Julius Great  
He some-how felt that self-same fate  
Lurking within a far-off feeling  
Which came in secret o'er him stealing,  
As if a trance against his will  
Made in his heart the future thrill.  
The great man saw he fatefulest,  
Though deemed by all the world the best.  
Inside his narrow muslin den  
He lay, while around him snored his men  
Fore-done with marching all that day  
Beneath the sunbeams's fervid play  
Upon the flowering month of May.  
Outstretched he rolled upon his bed,  
With one coarse blanket overspread  
Upon the prairie's mattress green  
Which spring had laid for him unseen;  
His head might feel a passing jog  
Pillooned upon a little log;  
Over head he heard the wild goose cackle,  
And under him the grasses crackle  
As he lolled round upon his cot,  
And could not sleep a jot.  
He fell into remote reflection

In which his soul roamed this direction:  
“The hero’s good is blent with guilt,  
For which the doer’s blood is spilt;  
Whereby he sheds him of what’s mortal  
Just at eternity’s oped portal;  
The penalty he pays for his great deed,  
He dies to win undying meed.”

Thus Lincoln felt the stab in Cæsar’s death  
So tensely that he gasped for breath,  
As if he too were doomed to fall  
Slain in the Capitol;  
And at the blow of Casca’s dagger  
The Captain weened himself to stagger,  
In universal sympathy  
Felt with the great man’s tragic due,  
And from that fate-forecasting revery  
Sleep, the Releaser, could not set him free,  
But the fast thought would soon itself renew  
That what once was, again will be:  
Such cycle inward runs and outward too.

The soldiers rise and cook their meal  
When rosy dawn has lit the day,  
But still a load within they feel  
Which somehow will not pass away;  
Each has a secret dread insouled  
Which will not let itself be told.  
The prairie is a sphinx today  
Changeless as time in its huge face,

Cannot be made a word to say,  
Silent as the soul of space  
Untongued throughout the universe.  
The kerchiefed clouds wave in the sky  
Some flitting fringes to the eye  
As if they meant to say good-bye,  
And leave our clay to its own curse.  
It might have been yet even worse  
Had not the sun when he rose up,  
Let drop into the buttercup  
A pretty piece of his own sheen,  
And left a little laugh upon the scene,  
Which by the hundred thousand was re-  
peated  
And with their joy the heavy-hearted  
greeted;  
To them were joined a million morning-  
glories  
All choir ing everywhere their tiny stories,  
And so the prairie Goddess Flora wooed  
In love that melancholy multitude.

At dusk the soldiers reached a wood  
Which by a flowing streamlet stood—  
Tired, hungry were they, and depressed,  
Seant too they had become of food.  
They did not feel so very good  
As they prepared for nightly rest.  
Just then to camp came up a man  
Whose features they could barely scan,

For it was getting somewhat dark,  
His skin and hair they did not mark.  
Thus he in friendly tone began:  
"I thought that you might need some meat,  
Your appetite I would here greet  
With prairie chickens and some ~~quails~~,  
While yonder is a pile of rails  
With which we soon can cook a feast,  
And fill the biggest belly and the least."  
The word set every eye to bulging,  
The man kept on his deed divulging:  
"I went a-hunting up this run,  
My luck was good, I had much fun;  
With soldier boys I fain would share  
What I may get just anywhere;  
Tomorrow I shall do the same  
At eve shall bring to you more game;  
I note you all are getting limber,  
Come, let me prop you with the stomach's  
timber."

The men soon gathered round the blaze  
Each ate in once for two full days,  
The meal seemed Heaven's timely gift,  
Meanwhile their tongues began to drift  
Backward, and talk of that event  
Wherein a woman slave away was sent:  
It echoed yet within their hearts,  
So that a fresh discussion starts  
From mouths with sated appetites,  
Which now can talk of wrongs and rights.

The hunter never said a word,  
Yet all the feelings and the facts he heard,  
He showed it not if he within was stirred.  
But when the camp lay in its deepest snore  
And dawn was taking her first peep before  
The curtains of the night,  
He slid off in Aurora's light.

## IV.

The march was taken up next morn,  
But in them all there had been born  
A conflict clouding every mind  
And it they could not leave behind;  
It marched with them along unbidden,  
Its nightmare had them all beridden,  
The ghost could not somehow be hidden,  
Felt rather 'twas than by them seen,  
Each quizzed himself, what could it mean?  
Sometimes a man interrogated,  
Though in an underbreath quite bated:  
“What has become of that black wench?”  
Lincoln would give a little wrench,  
Then smile: “You mean the matron sable.  
Of crafty Reynard, who was able  
His fellow animals to entertain  
With their own follies over and over again  
Let me rehearse a little fable  
In his own foxy vein.”  
It was of Bruin stealing honey

And getting caught by his forepaws;  
The thing appeared so very funny  
The grumbler soon forgot his cause.  
So a refusal Abe would cover  
In merry tale and smooth it over,  
Of fableland the happy rover.  
But inwardly he did not laugh,  
He always felt the half-and-half  
Within himself and country too,  
Forelimping what he had to do;  
The unseen burden weighed him down,  
Laden upon his very soul,  
Which seemed to gloom in fortune's frown,  
The stone away he could not roll;  
But when he refuged in a story,  
The sun would rise again in glory.  
The troop had well the time beguiled,  
Through Mayday's green they gaily filed;  
'Twas now a band of boisterous jokers,  
On whom all Nature smiled,  
Though with a face somewhat defiled,  
In puffs tobaccoed by those smokers;  
And hope was mountain high uppiled,  
E'en if there were some croakers.  
Already they had neared the spot  
Where fair Rock River joins her lot  
To her huge-bodied lover,  
And with him fondles under flowing cover.

Lincoln was lolling on his cot

Upholstered with lush prairie grass,  
When suddenly he saw a human mass  
Surging an Indian round about,  
With many a curse and angry shout  
Which on him fell a very shower,  
While he beneath would cower.

The captain soon among them stood,  
And bade them stay their bloody mood  
Until the redskin's ease he heard,  
Whom now he told to speak his word.  
Trembling old Loo reached out a pass  
Which had been signed by General Cass  
Saying: "This Indian I can commend,  
He is an oft-tried white-man's friend;—  
Much service he can still us do—  
Treat him well, for he is true."

When Lincoln read the little note,  
There rose a throbbing in his throat,  
His soul was growing tender,  
Return for good he has to render  
Unto that wretched red-skinned mortal  
Now facing there fate's final portal.

Meanwhile the raging multitude  
Lusted to let his hapless blood;  
A big frontierman stepped up to the fore,  
A dagger in his belt he wore,  
His rifle on his arm he bore;  
His spittle with his speech he sputtered  
So madly swashed his tongue,  
His words in hissing bits he spluttered

Screeching out of his topmost lung:  
“Why have we come from home so far?  
Why are we going now to war?  
This fellow’s kin are those we fight,  
Here we have him in our might;  
As he and his have done to us and ours,  
So we shall pay him back, by all the powers!  
Our business is the Reds to slay  
We might as well begin today;  
The sooner thus will end the fray.  
An Indian pierced my father with his dart,  
I feel that arrow quivering in my heart,  
And riving me with ceaseless pain,  
Till I pay back the heinous deed  
And wash away the bloody stain  
By blood—that is my creed.”  
All shouted to that speech: “Agreed.”

The captain listened to the vengeful word,  
And in his soul felt deeply stirred,  
To him the same hap had occurred—  
Grandfather Lincoln by an Indian killed,  
His own ancestral blood in ambush spilled:  
That bullet oft would riot in his brain,  
And now it seemed to bob again,  
And to a red revenge him thralled  
Until his higher self recalled  
The image of the kind old wanderer  
Who him of vengeance had once freed  
By planting just one little seed,

Whose growth failed not his heart to stir.  
So Abraham stood balancing the strife  
Which in himself had risen up to life,  
The borderer's fierce fury fought  
Upon an inner battle field his new-won  
thought;  
His soul he saw in twain divided,  
Tetering with itself two-sided!  
But while he for a moment swayed,  
Another pioneer had drawn his blade  
His vengeful feud in wrath to wreak,  
While tears streamed down his burning  
cheek:  
“An Indian scalped my brother at the plow  
An Indian's scalp in turn I shall take now.”  
Loo cowered under Lincoln's arm  
Which soon he saw to be his shield from  
harm,  
Whence he a little speech did make:  
“I have come hither for your sake;  
My people hate me as the white man's  
friend,  
The whites now hate me and my life will end,  
Because my skin is red;  
Kill me, I wish that I were dead.”  
He even stretched out then his neck,  
But Lincoln held them all in check,  
And told the Red he should be heard  
If still he wished to speak a word.  
Then heightened up his head old Loo,

His eyes beamed glances that shot through  
The seething stormy multitude  
Which sought to let his blood;  
His coppery face gleamed to a golden hue:  
"One word is all I ask to say,  
To serve you wander I today;  
Whatever you may do to me,  
Revengeful I shall never be,  
But serve you still, though you me slay."

Then Lincoln stepped before the uplifted  
knife

To save the loyal red man's life,  
The angry crowd he dared disperse  
Although he got their curse,  
And when away they had been sent,  
He bade old Loo come to his tent.  
There they in confidence could speak,  
The captain would the secret seek  
Which Loo had dimly intimated  
In the few words he had just stated.  
But what far more stirred Lincoln's interest  
Was the strange faith which Loo professed:  
Let ill betide, he did the right,  
And never would a wrong with wrong re-  
quite.

A chapter new that seemed to be  
Of Indian theology.  
Which Lincoln hitherto had never known,  
Strangely it sounded somewhat his own,

If he could be himself alone.  
When both had settled in the tent,  
Old Loo took up again the argument:  
Alone he had far wandered forth  
Away from home up in the North.  
All of his kin but him went out to aid  
The furious Hawk in bloody raid,  
When they the Whites had slain or driven  
out,  
They planned to wheel about,  
Return and kill good Keokuk,  
The settlers' best red friend,  
Whose cause he never once forsook,  
Though his own folk he might offend.  
“To Keokuk,” said Loo, “I go,  
To tell him all that I may know;  
For jealous Black Hawk seeks his place  
Will be the chief of tribe, of race,  
His foes, both white and red efface.”  
Further Loo spake within that tent  
To Lincoln's great astonishment:  
“Captain, you see I am unarmed,  
Long, long it is since I have harmed  
A human being, red or white,  
Nor do I ever fight  
Or shed one drop of blood,  
I try to do both races good,  
Passing from one side to the other,  
And every man I hold to be a brother.  
That's not the Indian's way, I know,

Nor white man's either, though he says so,  
Declaring such to be his creed,  
But very different is his deed.

I strive to stop disorder,  
And keep the peace upon this border,  
Soothing the strife between your skin and  
mine

That both may dwell together on this line:  
Such thought I learned of a wandering man,  
To plant his seeds was all his plan,  
His face was white though good he said,  
I say the same—my face is red.  
Let me now tell in brief my creed—  
I am the Indian Johnny Appleseed."

Lincoln sprang up at that strange name,  
He thought that he had heard the same  
Far off in his old home,  
When on his flatboat he did roam.  
But hark! around his tent's low door  
The noise is louder than before;  
Again the raving multitude  
Clamors for the red devil's blood—  
The threats are getting warm  
When to the middle of that storm  
Leaps Lincoln's stalwart form:  
"This Indian is our friend and good,  
He's not of Black Hawk's savage brood"  
Whereat the entire rout  
Sends up a maddening shout:

“Indian good, Indian dead—  
It is the white against the red.”  
That proverb of the pioneer  
Is spoken along the whole frontier,  
The traveler can still it hear.  
The Captain sprang aback and drew his  
sword,  
Sword of the Rutledges,  
To serve him in his sorest stress,  
And thus he spake a forceful word  
While from his weapon’s point a spark  
Shot out which every eye did mark:  
“Whoever injures that poor fugitive,  
Shall do the wrong when I no longer live,  
Upon my corpse you must step first—  
I dare you do your worst.”

Whereat his eye flashed out more keen  
Than any falchion ever seen,  
It was a sword—sword of the spirit  
Which in himself he did inherit,  
And all his life he had to wear it.  
But when the crowd let him alone,  
His speech turned to a milder tone.  
“Grandfather mine, by an Indian slain,  
Comes up to me in blood again,  
But if you try what you have said,  
Fate bids me perish for the red,  
Though I am white like you,  
First to myself I shall be true.”

Quite ended had the wild ado,  
But Lincoln felt himself not through,  
A word now seemed to be in season  
Which would from force appeal to reason:  
“This man, I say, is innocent,  
I shall protect him in my tent,  
He has no weapon, gun or knife,  
And now he risks for us his life;  
He bears a message to our Indian friend,  
The sage Sauk chief, good Keokuk,  
Whose eloquence would Black Hawk fend  
From ways of war without forelook;  
To do his task I shall him send,  
And bid Godspeed the happy end.”

Here Lincoln stopped; the silent crowd  
Though in the sullens, still was cowed,  
When he, his blade still hilted in his hand,  
Gave with stern eye-shot this command:  
“I call for five men good and brave  
Who dare me help this red-skin save,  
Conducting him across yon river,  
That he his message may deliver,  
With friendly Keokuk may talk,  
The sage old chief of Fox and Sauk.”

When he had spoken well the word,  
He seabbarded his sword.

Five trusty soldiers soon were found  
With loaded guns and knives well ground,  
Were a determined little band,  
Would carry out the just command.

But to escape the ugly plight,  
They took the cover of the night,  
And crept along to the river wide  
Upon whose shore they found a skiff,  
Which bore the Red to the other side,  
Where soon he slipped behind the cliff;  
Giving his guard a grateful look  
He turned his face toward Keokuk,  
Whom he would save from bloody hate  
Forewarning him of Indian fate,  
Which also over Loo hung down  
And flung upon him many a frown,  
But could not catch him in its grip,  
So it would always let him slip.  
And yet between two fires stood Loo  
Blazing from whites and red men too;  
Hated he was by his own kin  
As renegade to his red skin;  
Suspected by the paler sort of face,  
He never won the way of grace,  
He too embodied tragedy of race.

But who is this who brings some needed  
game?  
The hunter 'tis without a name;  
He comes between the day and darkening,  
And does this eve much harkening;  
He hears the soldiery's ado  
He sees the Captain save old Loo,  
And seems o'ermastered through and  
through

By something to him new.  
Still he prepares again the meal  
Though absent-minded oft in act,  
Self-occupied with some deep fact;  
He lets the camp its heart reveal  
While he his own doth more conceal;  
But when young daylight is unvailing night,  
The stranger too fleets out of sight;  
Still he had seen the conflict of the races  
In its full swirl mid these white faees,  
And he had heard of that slave-wife  
Who with her child had roused a racial strife;  
That taps his heart with latent feeling rife.  
The hunter will not come again,  
Since he has heard enough  
To start in him another strain,  
For a new life he gets the stuff;  
All went quite opposite to what he willed,  
But just the mightier it was fulfilled;  
That Captain showed the power to mediate  
Of coming time the froward fate  
Which lurks deep down in racial hate.  
“Twice,” said the hunter, “has he shown the  
vision  
To solve man’s ultimate collision;  
To me and mine I see his far outreach,  
Within myself heals nature’s breach;  
Still I must go and take the word  
Unto my former faithful friends,  
Telling them what I’ve seen and heard,  
And so I’ll try to make amends.”

## V.

It was the middle of the night,  
But Lincoln could not shut his sight,  
Although he forced his eyes to close  
His darkest nature to the surface rose,  
Down laden with three races' throes  
Which he could feel in his own woes.  
So her most melancholy thread  
Clotho kept spinning through his head;  
And as he lay in hopeless mood  
A form stooped through the door and stood,  
In its faint glint the moonshine drew  
The outline of a face he knew  
And softened its benignant look  
Until a heavenly glance it took.  
Lincoln jumped up, it seized and shook,  
Then said “Well, well, you are no spook,  
But man alive among us men;  
I can’t dig out the where or when,  
But I have met you once before  
Upon this shifting earthly shore.”  
To Lincoln spake that ghostly form  
Which breathed its word from body warm:  
“Thou hast already seen my face,  
And more than once I’ve found thy trace,  
Thee have I kept in mind  
As one for future work designed  
After the stamp of Providence  
Who marks his early instruments.  
Upon my fruit well hast thou thriven,

Along the way it fell God-given  
To you and all your soldiery,  
From what appeared a forest tree;  
You wondered much how that could be.”  
Then Lincoln rose up to his feet  
As if he would a benefactor greet:  
“You are the man who did that deed,  
Planting the mothering earth with fruitful  
seed—

You are the one whom I most wish to meet;  
With such example I would plant my soul  
To see, if in Time’s onward roll  
It too would bear a little crop  
Or if its growth in me would stop.”  
The pallid phantom then turned red,  
And smiling to the youth he said:  
“Today I have well noted thee  
Saving from death the guiltless man,  
E’en though he was an Indian,  
And letting him in peace go free.  
That’s the worthiest fruit of me,  
If I dare deem it mine,  
For it is also thine.  
More than my trees, my deeds I plant  
Supplying a far deeper want  
Than any hunger of the flesh,  
Which always troubles us afresh,  
And never can be satisfied,  
Though every day it must be tried.  
Myself as whole I would impart,

My thought, and deeper still, my heart:  
That is the sowing which I seek to speed,  
Which stills the deepest human need  
With the universal deed.”

On Lincoln's head his hand he laid  
Though it was no caressing,  
Upward he looked as if he prayed,  
And gave the youth his blessing:  
“The other day I saw thee too,  
When the black mother thou didst pull  
    through,  
To thy far threatening danger,  
Although a slave she was and stranger.  
That was thy great prophetic act  
Which is to be the eternal fact.  
Thy land itself thou shalt set free  
And give a race its liberty.  
Twins are thy deeds well mated,  
The red and black thou hast emancipated  
In this brief march of thine:  
I see in it a vast design.”  
Lincoln stood gazing in that face  
While he bethought himself apace,  
Then showed the man a little book  
Which he from his breast pocket took:  
“This was thy gift I now recall,  
But of thy giving 'twas not all;  
Thy wayside tree gave food and rest,  
But that was not of thine the best,

It is thy self thou didst present  
To me in that New Testament.”  
The man still had a word to say  
Before he went away:  
“Thou must yet do for every slave  
What thou just now hast done;  
Before thou sleepest in thy grave,  
To all thou hast to raise the one:  
That is to be thy life,  
Yet not without the strife,  
But what most deeply felt thou hast today  
Is this: thy country’s law is too in chains,  
Which thou must cleave mid groans and  
pains,  
E’en though thou break it on the way;  
For now the law’s own violation  
Forefronts the right’s emancipation;  
In that slave woman was enslaved  
The Constitution, which thou hast braved;  
It too thou shalt of bonds set free—  
Thy greatest gift to all posterity,  
Forecasting universal liberty.”

Startled to sudden shiver was the youth,  
Though in the depths he felt the dreamy truth  
Of that prodigious prophecy,  
Whose burden crushed him with its pregnant  
thought,  
Until relief welled up unsought  
In tear drops from his eye.

At last he spoke: “Not yet, my man!  
To that I have to grow  
E'en if I think it may be so,  
And glimpse at times the coming plan,  
Which seems to widen limits national  
Till they include the races all.”  
The shape stood silent for a while,  
Then stamped upon his words a smile:  
“Red Keokuk I also know,  
He has what I bestow,  
Somewhat I planted in his spirit,  
Whoso him hears may hear it;  
If he should fall into thy might,  
Spare him—he will do the right.  
But now I have to go,  
Tomorrow has some work to do;  
Again thee shall I somewhere see,  
And tell thee more—so mote it be.”  
Ere Lincoln could pick up his sight,  
The man had vanished into night.

## VI.

Time has outtold the minutes dreary  
Of secret nagging night,  
And dropped the last into the rising sun,  
Whose radiant peep has just begun  
To make the sombre earth more cheery  
With its Titanic laugh of light,  
Which wakens the whole world of sight—  
No longer nature nods foredone.

The crescent upper disc of Sol  
Is shooting straight across the prairie's roll  
With fiery cannonade of beams,  
Over the grass its leveled blaze  
Is pouring forth in golden rays;  
Waging a kind of war it seems  
Against the withering dragons of the night,  
Which it must daily put to flight,  
To cleanse of death the outer air  
And cure the inner world's despair.  
So now we fantasy the sun  
In war to wear his gun.

The soldiers stayed in camp that day,  
Grumbling the heavy hours away,  
Sulking in groups they stood around  
Little the pleasure now they found,  
In merry prank and joke and tale;  
The soldier's life has gotten stale,  
And in each soul a sullen mood  
Of melancholy seems to brood.  
Vengeance against the Indian Loo  
Is thrilling still their bosoms through,  
And making them its passioned thrall,  
Nor do they spare the Captain tall  
Who from their hands had saved a Red—  
That was the worst that could be said.  
Lincoln himself felt his eclipse  
And thought to try some of his quips,  
Or set to work a merry story,

But now it paled its former glory;  
However hard he sought the word to fit  
He could not make a single hit,  
And somehow his best anecdote  
Would catch and stick down in his throat,  
Without the cracker at the end,  
Though all his brain-fire he would spend;  
The nub might snap a little sizzle  
But soon it sputtered in a fizzle.  
He even tried to tell the hero  
Who made himself at Troy a zero  
Through wrath's revenge long, long ago;  
Still the narration would drag slow,  
And never could be made to flow,  
Though 'twas the greatest tale of all the  
ages,  
And lit the centuries' poetic pages.  
But never got he to the middle,  
Stopped by a sudden silent No  
Which seemed his tongue to overthrow,  
And turn the story to a riddle.

Then soon a cry was upward sent:  
“That sort of yarn for us is fagging,  
Open the clack-box of the regiment,  
Let's hear again Jack Kelso's bullyragging;  
Of thunder-words he gets the very crack,  
Of spouting Shakespeare he knows the knack,  
The best of all we like his clack.”  
Lincoln agreed with just this view,

But had another thing at heart,  
For he assigned a drama new  
To Kelso for a tragic part;  
"Richard the Third is now," quoth he,  
"The very man we ought to see,  
The lore too which we ought to learn;  
Come, do us, Kelso, this good turn."  
Jack played that crookback of a scamp  
Till shivers ran through all the camp.  
He gave the speeches with a detonation  
Which set the prairie in vibration;  
And one might hear the echo of that roar  
Along the torted Mississippi shore,  
Reverberating thousand fold  
Demonic sneers of Gloster bold.  
Vengeance his word, vengeance universal—  
Which raved and hissed through that rehearsal,  
As if the dragons huge of a cyclone  
With angry coils and twists contrary  
Uprose and grappled on the prairie  
In hideous howl and mournful moan,  
Which ended in a dying groan.  
Richard destroying all his foes,  
And even his own nearest kin,  
Blood-spotted through the drama goes,  
Ever wading deeper in  
Until he came to Bosworth Field,  
Where he in battle had to yield,  
By that day's vengeance overthrown,

And so in turn he got his own.  
His demon's deed was done to brother,  
As well as many another,  
So each man saw his bloody counterpart:  
Such was the height of Kelso's art;  
Unto that camp he showed its very heart,  
And held it up with vengeance quivering,  
So that he set all bosoms shivering  
In dread response, although unwilling;  
For each could see himself just by that play  
His brother's blood in spirit spilling,  
Through what had happened only yesterday.  
And each had caught the deeper creed:  
Man ever must get back his deed,  
Though it may cycle round the universe,  
At last it comes for better or for worse;  
According to the life he lives  
The even recompense it gives.  
In silent rue the men pass to their station  
With sting of keenest human evil,  
For they had seen their very incarnation  
In Richard Crookback's ugly devil;  
Each recognized his hideous counterfeit,  
And tried to run away from it;  
Each heard his diabolic scoff,  
When Lincoln dared to hold him off  
From slaying innocent old Loo,  
Because the skin showed red to view;  
It turned a time of deep self-seeing  
When every soul glimpsed its own naked being.

At last the sun withdraws his beams  
And drops his head upon the pillow'd West,  
Worn with his day's o'erarching quest;  
To imitate the sun the soldier seems,  
And weary lies down to his rest.  
But he repeats in sleep the frenzied dreams  
Of Richard's conscience ghost-oppressed,  
Yet showing of him what was best,  
For he a dream can still repent  
Of all his waking devilment.  
More than ten thousand Indians with their  
yell,  
Those shadows stirred that band to fear of  
Hell;  
Such was the might of Shakespeare's word  
dramatic,  
Though voiced by backwoods Kelso the erratic.

## Canto Sixth.

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### *BLACK HAWK'S MARCH.*

#### I.

Full-flooded seethed the Iowa  
Around its winding banks that day  
When all of Black Hawk's band set out  
The white intruder to expel;  
It was of Reds a furious rout,  
Each heart aflame in passion's Hell.  
The turbid river hissed and boiled  
As it ran through its channel coiled;  
It sought its bound of shores to swallow  
And turn inside that outside hollow;  
It seemed a mighty water-snake  
Which would in ever-wriggling wrath retake  
The earth into its body yellow,  
And gave at every crook a bellow.

But now along its banks in angry swell  
An Indian stream runs parallel  
Which also seeks with raging blood  
To reach the Mississippi flood,  
And crossing it somehow flow back  
Along an ever-westering track,  
And thence the sunset steps retrace  
Imprinted by a fleeing race.

Looking upon that turbulent throng,  
Which past him surged the way along,  
Stood in reflection steeped Black Hawk  
Who there within himself began to talk:

“My blood no longer skips in fun  
Tingling in every limb to start and run  
But it begins to slow its speed,  
And loiters doing the daring deed.  
The rounding years three score and five  
Since I in time was born,  
Have left me hardly half alive,  
And getting more forlorn;  
Still I must rouse myself once more  
And be the warrior as of yore,  
Do better than I ever did before.  
The white man’s progress I must stay  
And hurl him back to whence he started,  
Back to the ray of rising day,  
With whose quick flashes he has westward  
darted  
Unto the Mississippi’s shore

From the far Ocean's roar.  
The Redskin's ever-flinching flight  
I shall bend round with might,  
Shall make his white-skinned foemen run  
And leap headlong into the Sun,  
To be forever out of sight,  
Where it first lifts its head from night.  
Old Keokuk I shall defy  
With all his gloomy prophecy,  
Who weens the Indian doomsday nigh  
If we dare see our former dwelling place,  
And spend upon our father's graves a sigh.  
Let come the death of all our race  
Just now, if we must further fly;  
Then face about, Black Hawk—and die.”

’Twas with himself he held this talk—  
Dreamy, dissatisfied Black Hawk;  
Ambition gave him no repose,  
And ever stabbed him with its throes,  
For Keokuk the place had won  
Of highest tribal dignity,  
And had his rival too outshone  
In eloquence’s chieftaincy.  
Still Black Hawk held fast to his scheme,  
Would realize his savage dream:  
Two centuries he would reverse,  
Back into chaos them immerse;  
As he bethought his past career  
He lisped into his own self’s ear:

“My youthful ardor was so keen,  
I went to war before sixteen,  
A tribal foe as boy I slew,  
And home I brought the trophy too.  
Next with the Cherokees I fought,  
And from the field new honors brought,  
But my good father Pyesa  
Fell in the bloody fray,  
Vengeance I feel down to this day.  
Kaskaskias and Chippewas,  
Osages and the Iowas  
I helped obliterate,  
And carried out the red man’s fate  
To be by his own race destroyed—  
Which Keokuk has so annoyed.  
Then reached our River the American,  
The curse of curses for the Indian—  
The devil is he ’gainst whom I plan.  
He cut in pieces our one soil,  
And shared it out to his white kin  
Who everywhere came streaming in;  
Then he himself would even toil  
And leave at home his idle squaw:  
Whoever heard of such a law?”  
While thus Black Hawk alone stood musing,  
The priest Francesco was not losing  
His outlook on the circumstances,  
But ready was to seize all chancées.  
He slipped up to his moodful friend,  
Perchance advice in time to lend,

At least some moments well to spend,  
Which might the Indian keep aright  
When foamed the crisis at its height.  
First Black Hawk tongued the waiting word  
With savage compliments before unheard:

“A Spaniard I am always glad to see,  
There is some bond 'tween him and me;  
A strain of nature makes us deeply one,  
Though he be priest, while I take to the gun.  
A common craft we both possess,  
And vengeance we can hide in a caress;  
Linked too we are in common hate  
Of this new man and of his State.  
E'en though we be of different race  
We look alike, methinks, out of the face;  
Religion too is not the same,  
At least each has its separate name;  
And both of us have one great joy:  
We love our enemies—to destroy.  
Although our worlds be far apart,  
We are alike deep down in heart.  
And I do dote on talking Spanish  
E'en if my accent be outlandish,  
Its words run round and rhyme so jinglish;  
But I do hate the very sound of English,  
Its speech cuts in my ear a slash,  
Long afterwards I feel the gash,  
I fain would fight it to its overthrow,  
And take its scalp just like a foe.

That language—when I try to talk it,  
My tongue will only tomahawk it.  
But Spain I dream the happy hunting ground,  
Set in the sun-up's golden glow;  
Thither I too beyond shall go,  
When my full days have done their round;  
There all our greatest Indians will be found  
Still with their tomahawk and bow,  
In all their feathered high estate,  
Circling forever the Spirit Great—  
Our Manitoo."

So Black Hawk spoke his compliment  
With Indian etiquette well-meant,  
Though sounding somewhat heathenish,  
To that sleek Spaniard Molinar,  
Who seemed to smile his heart's assent  
Though inwardly he was at war  
And relished not the godless dish,  
For e'en his wish he must at times unwish.  
To everything the savage said  
He never failed to nod his head,  
But would not back it with his word,  
Not let a single smile be heard.  
Whereat the Redskin higher raises  
His voice, with a wild whoop of praises:

“I love the Spaniard and his rule,  
And still I go to him to school.  
Some things of his I do not take

But him I never shall forsake.  
Down to St. Louis would I often float  
In my canoe to see the lord of note,  
Whom Governor the people name,  
My Spanish father I called the same.  
A number of them I knew well  
And every year would visit them a spell;  
They let us keep our law and land,  
They traded with us hand to hand,  
That was our time of greatest bliss,  
Which now in sorrow we all miss.  
There came another sort of man,  
This vile land-thief American,  
With his fire-water's hell—  
I know that yellow devil well,  
Though it I never drink,  
In flames it makes the Indian sink,  
Turning him sick instead of well  
And then he wallows just pell-mell;  
He fights his friend and whips his wife,  
It quills him over like a porcupine,  
Which jabs each kindly hand, or mine or  
thine;  
It is the White's bad medicine  
To cure the red man of his life;  
So will the pale face solve the races' strife.  
On us he casts his greedy frown,  
But I keep out of that vile town,  
So wicked since the American  
Has gotten there with all his clan,

Different now from good St. Louis  
Which once with presents did bestrew us,  
That paradise devoid of cares  
The sinner new to enter dares;  
The happy creole he is not  
But laden with a toilsome lot.  
Miserable town! I hate the spot,  
For there was signed the treaty, wretched  
writ,  
Which guiled us of our own true home  
Compelling us again to roam  
And of our land is left us not a bit.”  
Then Black Hawk viewed the passing crowd,  
And cheered them on with accents loud:

“Now we are going back to Saukenuk,  
Our lovely village by the Rock,  
Despite the warning of old Keokuk  
Who would our noble impulse block;  
Let him enjoy his wives, some two or three—  
I find one is enough for me,  
Let him at home his gilt fire-water Guzzle,  
Rather would I look in a musket’s muzzle.  
So march ahead in haste, my braves,  
We shall re-take our father’s graves,  
Our white-faced foe forever foil  
And own again our former soil.”  
When he had heartened thus his train,  
To Molinar he turns again,  
And whispers into priestly ear  
Some words that thrill with gleeful fear:

“Now to Rock Island goes our way,  
The Fort to seize without delay  
A secret plot will it ensnare,  
In which I am to do my share, . . .  
Approaching on this side the stream;  
From the other side will spring the scheme  
Which will o'erwhelm the garrison.  
Of them there will be left not one,  
When we the deed have done.  
Soon will be seen no more their traces,  
Then shall we have our union of the races.”  
So Black Hawk spake to Molinar  
And gave a foreglimpse of the war  
Which made old Sol’s big downcast eye  
Look blood-shot out the upper sky.  
Meanwhile before them rolled along  
A barbarous upbubbling throng  
Of human beings in a stream,  
To fire the world was their wild dream  
And whelm it back to anarchy  
For then they thought they would be free.  
The warriors ride in line ahead—  
The tribal part which Black Hawk led—  
They bore the name of British band,  
’Gainst all Americans was raised their hand,  
In contrast with sage Keokuk’s folk  
Who stayed at home and shunned the fatal  
stroke.  
Through the wood and down the vale,  
Those Indians trod their beaten trail

Toward the Mississippi's flow,  
Whither each runnel tried to go.  
For though it might be very small,  
It would obey the Ocean's call  
To be of the great One-and-All.  
And as they trod they hummed a song;  
Each entire household bowled along  
And to a little ball seemed rounding  
Which with the footsteps went a-bounding.  
The sturdy squaw upon the road  
In moccasins would bear her load,  
From blanket on her swaying back  
Slung round her in a kind of noose,  
Two little eyes would peep jet-black  
Of her papoose.  
The other children about her ran,  
The coming flock barbarian.

The Indian lassie there lacked not,  
The Indian lad was also on the spot;  
Each cast at the other stolen glances—  
Would meet by signs well understood  
Alone would wander in the quiet weal,  
Or sit beside the troubled river's flood,  
According to the circumstances.  
And so sweet love is doing there  
What it does everywhere;  
It nooses the young hearts together  
And sometimes e'en the old,  
And ties them tightly to its tether,

Till it perchance grows cold.  
Alas! that it should not forever be,  
That love unlearns its glowing smile;  
But then, you know, eternity  
Is a good while.  
And yet 'tis said there is a love  
Which registers itself above,  
And so in time it cannot die  
Unless with its own tragedy.  
Such love by poets has been shown  
As if to them at least well known,  
Perchance to them alone.  
But here a deeper foreword must be said:  
There may be born a Juliet red,  
To her white Romeo so true  
That she will die with him when dead  
Feeling she has nought else to do;  
And so the difference of race above  
May rise the higher unity of love.

## II.

Reader, now turn away thy look  
To where the Mississippi makes a crook,  
And sweeps around an island's rock,  
A gem set in the middle of the stream,  
Which to the current gives a shock  
And makes it whirl in double gleam,  
As if the married waters to divide  
And turn a river to each side,

Which for a while flows separated  
Until again the loving twain are mated,  
And happily together glide  
In many a silvery ripple's slide.  
This is an island rock, which tells its name,  
And as Rock Island is known to fame,  
Which the fond River hugs in two arms  
strong,  
Gives it a kiss quite three miles long.  
Upon this isle a fort uprises  
Built by the United States,  
To guard against the foe's surprises:  
That fort is what the Redskin hates  
As one of his forefrowning fates.

Behold an Indian girl slips into view  
Upon the silent Eastern shore,  
She springs alone to her canoe  
And takes in hand her oar;  
She dips it darkling in the stream,  
'Tis after midnight with no moon's beam;  
The tear drops down, her heart is sore;  
She ne'er had done the like before,  
And yet she dared the more.  
The daughter of the chief she was  
Bred to the Indian's lore and laws;  
The village belle and favorite,  
Still she her tribe's own youth would slight,  
Not caring for their tender speeches,  
Her little world that maid outreaches,

She has a great ambition too,  
Will weld the racial chain anew,  
Transcending the fixed Indian bound;  
The wooing chiefs the country round  
In every Winnebago town  
She has turned down;  
E'en White Cloud once, the Prophet great,  
Sued humbly for her plighted troth,  
Although he had another mate,  
He weened he wanted both.  
But when he barely saw that maiden's frown  
In secret slunk he off to Prophet's town,  
He well foretold the right reply,  
For once he gave true prophecy.  
And Swartface too had felt a little ruffle  
For love of human kind again,  
Coming from a girl's least look,  
Which he could not so wholly muffle  
From tingling him with heart-deep pain,  
Beneath his misanthropic strain.  
Such was the love-born winning look  
Of maiden Winnemuk,  
For she had given her heart away—  
That consecration seemed to play  
In every little glance she took,  
In every word she had to say.  
Her aspiration could not cool—  
Then she had been well educated  
In an Indian mission-school  
Not far off from her home located;

The English tongue she spoke and read,  
Many a printed page lay in her head  
And welled up oft to memory  
Telling what was and is to be.  
The conflict of the red with white  
She knew from its first early start,  
Upon each side she saw a right  
And felt them both within her heart,  
Where they kept up their racial fight,  
And she with each of them took part,  
So in that red-skinned girl the time's sore  
strife  
Kept clashing up and down her way of life.  
In sympathy she pondered long  
Of Pocahontas the strange tale—  
That daughter of the chieftain strong,  
Who knew so well love's weal and wail  
For lover of a different race—  
And what beside took place.  
And she had read with many a throe  
The tale of Inkle and Yarico,  
The faithless English-speaking man,  
And the devoted maiden Indian,  
Who saved his life, and then her all him gave  
With this reward: he sold her as a slave  
Into a life forlorn  
Regardless of his child and hers unborn.  
Down deep the soul of Winnemuk  
That tragic story strained and shook,  
As its keen point she would uncover

For she had also a white lover,  
Whom she would dare to save  
Although the cost might be her grave.

Now in her cabin she had overheard  
The details of the Indian plan  
To slay the Bluecoats to a man  
Upon Rock Island in the River;  
She to her being's depths was stirred,  
And every muscle felt the quiver;  
One of the plotters was her sire,  
She heard him speak the bloody word  
Whose hate blazed a consuming fire  
Against the whites of every sort,  
But now against the holders of the Fort  
Which he would raze at once outright,  
Since it was built just opposite  
To where his Indian village stood  
Across a narrow intervening flood,  
And never was out of his sight.  
A tempest raged in every nook  
Within the heart of Winnemuk,  
For at Fort Armstrong was the chosen one,  
A soldier of the garrison  
Wearing the hated white-skinned face,  
Belonging to a different race.  
That night upon her cot she tossed,  
And for a while she held herself as lost;  
Though not a syllable she tattled,  
Inwardly she sorely battled:

“From my dear father and my brother,  
From sisters loved and my own mother,  
Am I now called to separate  
And bring on them perchance their fate?  
To whom is my allegiance due?  
Can I be to my love untrue?  
But that is just my deepest trouble:  
Oh Love, I find that thou art double.  
I feel thee in my bosom stalk  
And smite it with thy tomahawk,  
So that it bleeding lies in twain  
And never can be whole again.—  
But love my lover I shall dare,  
To that one Heaven goes up each prayer.  
My kinship then I must defy,  
And for my heart, if need be, die.”  
So spake the Indian maid alone,  
But there was heard from her no moan,  
She even could suppress the sigh,  
Although a tear globed round her eye.  
But still her thought within would roll  
Weighing just what to do with life,  
Which heaped her up with strife on strife,  
Whereat she took a midnight stroll  
Again communing with her soul:

“And now there comes another claim  
Which rises from that deepest deep  
Where races have their primal keep,  
Far down in man’s first living frame;

My outer tint is not the same—  
Must I yield up my people's trace  
And give me to another race?  
Ah, in the bitter jar of this misgiving  
Fain would I quit this strifeful living!  
All must I sacrifice to-day,  
Do it I shall, let come what may—  
My family, my tribe, my race,  
I shall give up and take disgrace!  
Yea, more! there looms before me death,  
I dare it take my final breath,  
The voice now bids me from above:  
Surrender thy whole world to love.”  
Thus by herself that maiden strove  
And fought inside her rifted heart,  
Then with a will resigned she rose  
And yet resolved to dare her part  
Amid the deepest human throes.  
Still now and then a hope would seem  
To soothe her to a fleeting dream  
That she might be an instrument  
Perchance through suffering from Heaven  
sent  
To obliterate ensanguined traces,  
And join in love two hostile races,  
So that the future time might be  
A line through her posterity.

Silent she sped her swift canoe,  
With it she knew just what to do;

She shot across the darkling stream,  
On which the fighting fiends did seem  
To rage around her every pull,  
While her own struggles had no lull;  
But all her ghosts inside and out  
Were foiled in turning her about.  
Soon to the pacing watch she came  
And in a whisper spoke her name,  
The guardsman chanced to be her lover,  
Who knew her voice beneath night's cover;  
For he had heard it thus before,  
This time was just once more.  
She told him what her errand was,  
And of her journey strange the cause,  
And why the danger was so pressing,  
Although to her an act distressing,  
He led her to his Captain in the Fort  
She told in tears the same report,  
Exposed the plot to burst to-morrow,  
With many a sob which spoke her sorrow.  
The Captain heard the treacherous scheme,  
He thought it was not all a dream,  
And called at once the commandant  
Whose name was Taylor, old Zachary,  
Whom a presentiment did haunt  
Of some sore trial soon to be,  
Though what it was he could not quite foresee.  
A doubt still lingered in his breast,  
And so he asked Maid Winnemuk,  
Eyeing her with a father's look

While giving her the final test:  
“Tell me the motive of this deed,  
Which made you dare alone the night to face,  
Defying all the ties of kin and race,  
In answer to some deeper need.  
That power would I like to know,  
Which can such bravery bestow  
Upon a simple girlish heart,  
Quite equal to a soldier’s part.”  
The maiden modestly replied,  
Shrinking a little to one side:

“Confess the power which me drove—  
I would my lover save.”  
Whereat she slipped out of the place  
And ran the guard at swiftest pace,  
But on the way she never stopped,  
Till in her boat she lightly dropped,  
Leaving old Zack in dreamy mood  
Which then he hardly understood,  
But later he will get a chance  
To test the meaning of this circumstance.  
But while she rowed the middle of the River,  
She prayed to it as the All-Giver;  
Though she had been baptized a Christian  
She dropped back to the Indian,  
And in her Nature’s far-down trance  
Upsprang her soul’s inheritance,  
Descended from ancestral faith;  
In quick response to fervid prayer

Lisp'd to the guardian Spirit there,  
Out of the water rose a snow-winged wraith,  
The shape of the great Manito  
Who makes the self itself to know;  
So now to Winnemuk he saith:

“I come to help thee in thy love  
Although it goes out to the white;  
The message hails thee from above  
And bids thee glimpse the future right;  
Love lifts thee up beyond the race,  
And washes out the tainted trace  
Though it be seen in every face.  
’Tis love that makes thee human,  
A fragile Indian woman,  
Now art thou more than red or white or black,  
Not moving on one race’s track,  
Hearing the universe’s call  
Thou art the semblance of the All.”  
The boat sheered to the shelving shore,  
The Manito was seen no more  
But dived into the foaming stream  
Yet stayed in Winnemuk’s high dream,  
She felt her love far greater than before,  
Ready to be its sacrifice  
Should ever that stern hap arise;  
Slyly she slipped in at her father’s door,  
Just when Aurora had begun  
To shoot some blushes at the seeking Sun,  
Although he was her hot pursuing lover

Whose eye could never get a look above her.  
So Winnemuk her cot had won,  
Much had she done that night, but more  
undone.

### III.

Still Black Hawk's troop winds serpentine  
Over the trail in drawn-out line  
Of women, children, and the old:  
Before them rode the horsemen bold.  
They cross the snaky little creeks  
Which secretly through prairies crawl,  
As if they might be playing tricks,  
Unseen till in them one may step or fall.  
Then all would curve through woody cove  
And hear the leafy organ of the grove,  
Whose pipes were lofty tops of trees  
Which chorused to the pumping of the breeze,  
With up and down of soft vibration,  
In melancholy susurration  
Which rose and fell in heart-tuned surges,  
Wreathing the way with Indian dirges,  
Seeming the outcome to foresigh  
In throbs of bodeful prophecy.

At last all reached a thick morass  
Where they couched hid in the long grass,  
Beside the Mississippi's flood;  
Not far away Fort Armstrong stood,  
Which was by Indians to be seized

And razed in cunning stratagem,  
Then they could do just what they pleased,  
No obstacle would stand their way to stem.  
The island fastness upward rose  
And threw a scowl back at its foes,  
By water everywhere begirt.  
The river would not let its child be hurt,  
Which lay upon its heaving breast  
By ripples all around caressed  
And kissing it to rest.  
Scarce had they found their hiding spot,  
When a canoe across the wavelets shot,  
And sped to shore where they lay hid  
To sight the signal which would bid  
Them do their portion of the plot.  
But suddenly ran up an Indian stranger,  
Who came to warn the Hawk of danger,  
Which had just dawned instead of victory;  
What could the matter be!  
White Cloud was called the man who came,  
With character told in his name;  
For what he said lay in a cloud,  
Though whitened was the wordy shroud  
Made of politest secrecy,  
E'en if it held the blackest lie.  
Winnebago was his nation,  
Prophet was his high vocation.  
But now he has to tell the truth,  
And even trembles in his ruth;  
Unto the Hawk aside he stepped,  
The prophet almost wept:

“You know our plan well laid—  
To seize the Fort, the Bluecoats slay  
Upon this very day—  
That plan has been betrayed!  
By whom I cannot say.  
A little village near the shore,  
Just opposite the hateful Fort,  
Was whence we would pass o'er,  
The whiteface likes to see the Indians dance  
And practice antics of that sort,  
While over us his banner flaunts;  
Thus oft we have the troops amused,  
And to us they were getting used;  
Unarmed they came and stood around  
To see us leap and beat the ground,  
To hear the whoop and song and clatter,  
Wondering what was the matter.  
When we had merrily danced awhile,  
Just long enough their senses to beguile,  
We were to give three whoops of war,  
Then rush and every gate unbar,  
While all the guards would yield their lives  
To the quick stab of our hidden knives;  
And at our common shout  
The rest from our own village would row out,  
With loaded guns to meet the fight  
Which would begin outright  
With all the soldiers of that garrison  
And officers—without excepting one;  
But when the battle reached its height,

Then you and yours from the other side  
Would cross the stream not there so wide,  
And all the Bluecoats with one whoop  
Into the stream you were to swoop,  
And so Fort Armstrong fell would fall—  
We would not leave one stone within its wall.  
But when we went to give the dance,  
The guardsmen looked askance;  
The gates were bolted doubly fast,  
The time to act was past;  
Then we were warned off from the isle;  
To my canoe I ran meanwhile  
And rowed in haste across the River,  
That I this message might deliver  
To you before it was too late:  
You must for us no longer wait,  
But for yourselves at once look out,  
Within a trice you ought to wheel about,  
For if your going be delayed,  
You too may be betrayed.”

The prophet thus the news bespake  
While through his body thrilled a quake,  
At that most sudden startling hap,  
Which smote him like a ghostly slap  
Out of his future dreamy world,  
And him into the present hurled;  
When he had sped the rapid word  
He left his hearers all unheard,  
He would not wait for their ado,

But ran a race to his canoe,  
Began to row with his full might,  
And soon was out of sight,  
Leaving the Hawk in sagging plight.  
So the first act of the grand scheme  
Turned out again an Indian dream,  
Fort Armstrong on its bedded water lies  
And all its red-skinned foes defies.  
The well-gunned Bluecoats still are pacing  
With keenest eye-shot round the walls,  
And every petty noise are tracing,  
Though but the bubbling of the waterfalls  
Which babble at the shallow shore,  
And tumble onward in a little roar:  
Sometimes 'tis less, and sometimes more,  
So that it throbs a tender heart  
And in a whisper speaks its part,  
Or to a music gives the beat  
With alternation loud and low,  
Which tunes the flight of river fleet  
To Time's unresting forward flow;  
Or maybe it is telling its own soul  
Of longing for the Oceanic roll.

## IV.

Five minutes were not gone before  
The Indian mass heaved in a mad uproar,  
For all had heard of that new danger  
Told slyly by the sudden stranger,

Whom they saw glide in his canoe,  
Mist-winged slipping out of view.  
The warning they were hot to heed  
And rushed away without a lead,  
Men, squaws, pappooses in confusion,  
Even the horses took the delusion,  
All ran together in a panic  
And roared ahead with howl Satanie,  
Never letting their furious pace  
Till they had put five miles of space  
Behind them in their breathless race;  
Weening old Nick upon their rear  
They hardly dared look round for fear  
Of seeing a blue-coated devil  
A cocked-up musket at them level.  
At last the rout no more could run  
But fell down on the ground undone,  
Awaiting there a speedy death,  
When they found out they still had breath,  
And had not yet become a ghostly wraith;  
Soon all uprose in mutual curse;  
Each blamed the rest for that disgraceful  
flight,  
They railed at Black Hawk for their plight,  
And then marched off—but none the worse.  
When Black Hawk saw he had been thwarted,  
He down the Mississippi started,  
He laid his failure to the stream  
Whose spirit flashed a hostile gleam,  
At least to him it so did seem;

Then in his boat upright he stood  
And roared in wrath his vengeful mood:

“Father of Waters, no longer friend,  
The red man thou wilt not defend,  
Protecting him in his old land  
Which kisses lovingly thy strand;  
Towards the setting sun away  
Thou scourgest him day after day  
So that he can no longer see thee roll  
And join his own to thy majestic soul,  
Till he may hear thy inner call  
And both be rapt into the One-and-All.  
But now to thee I shall not render thanks;  
To our white foe each of thy banks  
Thou hast in murmurous joy presented:  
That act is what I have in thee resented.  
Traitor thou art to thy red child  
On whom thou hast for ages smiled,  
Perfidious has been thy breast,  
While we have toyed with it for rest;  
Oft has thy laughter us beguiled  
In thy disloyal waves caressed;  
I hate thee more than any man,  
For thou art no good Indian;  
Upon a time I held thee wholly red  
But thou the nobler skin, methinks, hast shed,  
Hast changed thy tint just in my sight,  
A treacherous turn-coat over night.  
No wonder thou dost creep and crook!  
Shame! thou art worse than Keokuk!”

Such rage poured out the raving Hawk,  
He only to himself could talk,  
And so went on his furious musing  
The River as his fiend abusing;  
“Cursed be the day when once I floated down  
Thy villianous waves to old St. Louis town;  
More than three hundred moons ago it was,  
Of all our woes the hated cause;  
I saw him come, the new white man,  
Out of the East, the bad American;  
Thou didst upbear him, O false River,  
And softly set him on thy Western shore,  
Which he will stir from nevermore,  
I felt in me an earthquake’s shiver,  
And all this world rolled in a quiver,  
Which made me think the judgment day  
Was coming down this way.  
But I intend thy stream to cross  
Backwards, and so make up the loss,  
Driving to death these rash whitefaces  
Wreaking on them the rage of races.”

He scarce had winged the frantic word  
When under him a grinding sound was heard;  
Black Hawk’s canoe ran on a rock  
And stopped his tongue by one hard knock  
Whereat his vessel veered about,  
And circled on the current stout  
Until the prow again had started  
Back to the shore from which it parted;

He still was reeling in the double shock,  
When rose and stood upon the self-same rock  
The mighty spirit of the outraged River,  
Flapping his two outstretched white wings  
Whose tips together he in tempo flings,  
As if a swan might turn the Giver,  
But many times than swan more large—  
The pinions brushed the distant marge.  
And now from beak of spirit bird,  
In godlike tone comes forth the word:

“ ‘Tis I who halts thee on this rock,  
I would thy further passage block  
To save thee and thy blinded folk  
From the impending deadly stroke;  
Although I am by thee most hated,  
The spirit I whom thou hast rated.  
‘Tis true I am no longer Indian,  
Still I would save thee if I can;  
Thou mayst not prosper on this track,  
Therefore I bid thee now go back  
And dwell with Keokuk the sage  
Tuning to peace thy present rage;  
I have become the white man's sprite  
Subjected to a greater might;  
Upon this very stream of mine  
Another guardian takes my place,  
My power vanishes with thine,  
And passes to a different race.—  
Hark! it is coming! that new ghost

Which rules the realm which I have lost!  
This River like a horse it backs  
And whips it up with many whacks,  
Curling the ripples along its tracks;  
The domineering overlord  
Unto the Mississippi's flood,  
It puffs command in haughty word  
Which cannot be misunderstood.—  
I spy it yonder—I cannot stay—  
I see it swashing down this way—  
Good bye, Black Hawk, 'tis my last day—  
Go back, go back, I say.”

What could it be, that monster new,  
Which drove the Spirit old from view?  
Along it comes and gives a snort  
Which cuts that ghostly sentence short,  
And makes the specter dive headlong  
Into the current where most strong,  
As if to get out of the way  
Of its chief foe who will it slay.  
And Black Hawk too at once down ducked,  
In his canoe his head he tucked,  
Until the goblin passed upstream,  
Himself alive he dared not dream;  
It was a mighty apparition  
Which at a single breath and nod  
Dethroned the ancient River-God,  
And brought about a new condition  
In all of that adjacent land

Which stretches down the fluvial strand.  
The steamboat was that strange phantasm  
Which somehow seemed to cross the chasm  
Out of the old into the new,  
Though very real it is to me and you.  
But see it mount the stream a-straddle,  
And slap the wave with many a paddle,  
Whirling the wheel with its long cranks  
Which like two mighty arms stretch out  
And whiz their knuckled hands about,  
Fetching the flood their heavy spans  
With a revolving line of planks,  
And pushing thus upstream the boat  
Which else would down the current float.

But now the miracle of transformation!  
It seemed a turn of fresh creation,  
Black Hawk beheld his swan-god rise amain,  
And flap out of the stream again,  
Beheld the sky-wide plumage fly  
Up to that monster puffing nigh,  
And into it transmuted be  
Before his Indian imagination,  
So that he sole of all could see  
The two becoming one—  
By some exalted alchemy  
The miracle was done  
To outer and to inner vision.  
Behold between the twain a sudden kiss;  
Now watch the metamorphosis  
More weird than ancient poet ever fabled,

Though with a God it may be labeled;  
High Zeus turned to a swan in olden story,  
To meet his Leda by the stream  
And woo her with his brightest gleam,  
Divine the escapade, though amatory;  
But now the swan-wings fly to steam,  
Propelling a new body on the stream,  
That body plies the river and the ocean  
Imparting to the world new motion,  
Circling around the total earth  
Which it will belt with a new girth,  
And bind afresh its folk together  
With a universal tether.  
But that new River-God at last  
Beyond the sight of Black Hawk passed,  
And was no longer by him heard  
Flapping enskyed white wings agleam,  
Or puffing cloudward breaths of steam,  
Which to him voiced a winged word,  
As if it were a swan-like bird  
Of his white-pinioned dream.

The Indian Chief pulled his canoe  
Down to a little point's projection,  
Behind which lay his people hid from view  
To escape detection.  
Soon all were rowing on the flood,  
The crossing they made good,  
And at Rock River's mouth they landed,  
Just as Black Hawk commanded.

So they were on the soil of Saukenuk,  
Which all the settlers soon forsook.  
This was the former Indian village  
Now overgrown with white man's tillage,  
The houses of the hardy pioneer  
Soon were ablaze both far and near,  
The mother and her sucking child  
Were tomahawked by savage wild,  
And many a scalp of his white foe  
Was dangling from his belt for show.  
Yet there was one Caucasian face  
Which represented too a race,  
It was Francesco Molinar,  
Who helped the Redskins in this war;  
But with himself was not at peace,  
Could for his deed find no release,  
With his fierce comrades had to stay,  
'Till he somehow might slip away.  
Black Hawk had come unto the graves  
Of his forefathers where the river laves  
The shelving shore in ripples loving,  
Which never stop but keep on roving,  
Till in the Mississippi's flow  
They sink away with ecstacy  
And in its bosom to the ocean go,  
As minded on eternity.

And now starts up the exultation  
In dance and song and merriment,  
They deem themselves once more a nation—  
A gift from their Great Spirit sent

To whom they rave their incantation,  
With many horrid heathen rites  
Dripping with blood of slaughtered whites.  
And Molinar the priest was there  
Scanning the sanguinary scene,  
He seemed to mutter now and then a prayer  
As if he far away had been,  
For absent-minded was his air.  
But see the Indians turn and shiver!  
The new Great Spirit of the River  
Is panting forth its whiffs of steam  
And flies in haste adown the stream.  
Behold! it faces toward the mouth  
Through which the river Rock runs south,  
And near the village of the Sauk  
It stops as if to give a talk;  
When it has anchored on the shore,  
Bluecoats are springing from its back—just  
four—  
And at their head an officer  
Would with Black Hawk at once confer  
As soon as he had found the chief;  
Bravely he spake a sentence brief:  
  
“You must this very day turn back,  
Else you will have our army on your track;  
Yon stream you must recross  
Else you will suffer some great loss.  
What you intend I wish to know—  
Will you return? At once, say so”—  
Black Hawk upreared in Indian pride

And with a hissing scowl replied:  
No, NO.

Whereat the soldiers wheeled about,  
Yet rearward kept a sharp look-out  
With bayonets agleam,  
Until they reached again their boat,  
Which then began to puff and float,  
Veering around in haste upstream;  
But soon it curved a foreland's bight  
And swiftly shifted out of sight,  
Still could be heard its mighty indignation  
Borne on the breeze's suspiration.  
Black Hawk himself ran up his tower,  
A hill which stood not far away  
And over all the land did lower  
Which underneath its summit lay;  
High on its tip he settled there,  
To the old Gods would say a prayer;  
But only saw he everywhere  
The white man's new-come Manitō  
Defying Mississippi's flow  
And swimming up the raging flood:  
That boded to his world no good.  
Then looks he forth into the sky,  
The God there seems no longer nigh;  
The Sun rolls down his dome into the West  
In muffled sheen he sinks to rest,  
As if a tear might orb his big round eye  
In solar sympathy,  
Seeming to shed a fore-wept sorrow  
For what might rise with him to-morrow.

## Canto Seventh.

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### *LINCOLN'S DOUBLE OATH.*

#### I.

Behold the flowery riot of the plains  
Responsive to the childing April rains  
Which clasp together Heaven and Earth,  
Repeating ever Nature's birth.  
Now on that army's path of toil  
Spring everywhere leaps from the soil,  
Saluting all in happy smile,  
And breathing love withouten guile  
In kisses lasting many a mile.  
The prairie e'en showed courtesy  
From all its flat democracy,  
And reached to every eye along the way  
A mighty circumambient bouquet  
Which placed each man just at its heart

And rayed to him its laugh from every part  
Of the remote periphery  
Encircling that wide prairial Sea,  
Which waved afar enringed wreathes  
As when the wind on Ocean breathes.  
Sometimes a single sycamore  
Would shoot up from the even floor,  
And reach on every side its limbs,  
Starting to sing its little hymns  
All to itself out of its own tree top  
With many a varying organ-stop,  
Lapping its thousand leafy tongues  
Which answered every breezy fluff  
And piped a strain according to the puff  
Sent through its big arboreal lungs.  
The marching line of men did seem to make  
Upon the surface of the blooming lake  
An ever-widening wake,  
Whose ceaseless waves concentric roll  
A many-tinted scroll.

And as they wound their way around  
A zigzag path along the ground,  
At some bend often they could see  
The Mississippi suddenly;  
Whereat their eyes would brighter gleam  
As if a love they felt for that one stream;  
Holy perchance they would not deem  
Its water or its overflow;  
The Hindoos look upon the Ganges so,

And Egypt deified old Nilus long ago.  
But still the man of every station  
Felt for that stream a strain of veneration,  
Which made him look at it in awe  
Whenever it would into vision draw,  
As if it interlinked with his salvation,  
And bore his country's destiny  
Into the future's viewless Sea,  
The symbol of the freeing nation  
Hurrying forward into History.  
One drowsy eve the marching band  
Encamped anear the river's strand,  
And with their slumbers wove the rippling  
stream  
Transmitting life into a dream.  
For all that weary regiment  
The daytime's toil was with a music blent,  
Which tuned anew this earthly tenement.  
But Lincoln somehow could not sleep,  
His thoughts made him their vigil keep,  
From side to side his frame would roll,  
Yet more than weary was his soul,  
Until he sprang up from his bed,  
And to the river bank he sped,  
Reflecting on that incident  
In which the woman slave he sent  
Away from her old servitude—  
That stirred in him his deepest mood,  
And never quit his inner sight  
In the long watches of the night.

Upon the shelving banks he stalked,  
While to himself he seemed a ghost  
Who with him as another talked  
And in a common footstep walked—  
That shadow of himself was uppermost.  
Over the ripples played the moon  
And set both mind and nature to one tune;  
Then Lincoln lordly stopped and stood  
Addressing Mississippi's flood,  
Destined to flow through human histories  
With Tiber's fame and Euphrates':  
“Thou seemest now, O Stream, to me  
The very roll of destiny,  
As thou dost plunge in giant's play  
Along thy channeled way;  
Into the future sweeps thy line,  
And so does mine.  
What in the unborn world lies hidden  
Comes up unbidden,  
As I behold thy ever-forward gait;  
Myself in thee I contemplate,  
At what I am to be I wonder  
As years roll on above and under,  
Until the thread of life is clipped asunder;  
And over the border thou lurest me to spy,  
If there I may in hope descry  
Eternity.”

The speaker stayed his stirring speech  
Which had attuned its last outreach

In trying the Beyond to tell;  
Unbreathed in human tone it fell,  
Yet on the soul it left its silent spell.  
But soon with resolution's tether  
He pulled himself again together,  
Out of his spirit's boundless overflow  
Came back to something he could know:  
"Return I must from the unseen,  
To ask this River—what does it mean?  
The ripples leap in bubbling dance,  
But what is the significance?  
For Nature is no petty tinker,  
She is to me the deepest thinker,  
In her appearances both great and small  
She gives shy glimpses of the All,  
And even tells her elemental thought,  
But first her spirit must be caught,  
And, too, her language taught.  
Oh, mighty Heaven-tapping River,  
Thy benison comes of the Giver—  
Into thy single long-necked funnel  
Thou gatherest in hope each runnel,  
The largest streams as well as least  
Fetch all their riches to thy feast,  
Pouring adown the double mountain crest,  
Our boundary of East and West.  
Thy deepest word is unity  
Although each pottering brook be free  
To course its winding way to thee;  
Thy stamp is set upon this land, O River,

To make it one forever,  
Each little affluent of thine  
Doth lisp the same deep countersign:  
I must be one with all the others  
Just my own self to be;  
I have to live with all my brothers  
In one great family;  
From separation springs no life,  
But everlasting strife."

Thus to tense Lincoln seemed to speak  
Just at his side a buoyant creek  
Tumbling around its bedded stones  
In endless line of babbled tones  
Quite syllabled with parting lips  
As up and down the current dips  
Until it mingles with the louder gush  
In Mississippi's foremost rush.

But Lincoln could not well forget  
What left in him a large regret;  
There seemed to be a subtle might  
To put upon the stream a blight  
As it ran southward out of sight.  
Again arose that fleeing slave  
Whom he in camp had dared to save,  
Then he recalled the flat-boat scenes  
When once he floated down to New Orleans,  
He saw men sold to servitude,  
On which he never failed to brood.  
There heaved up high within his soul

A tossing Oceanic roll,  
He turned his lit-up face down stream  
And pierced the dark with a rapt gleam,  
For in him all the future seemed awake,  
And through his voice it spake :  
“I cast mine eye now to the other side  
And watch thy wavelets gaily glide,  
On yonder bank I hear no chain,  
Whose clanking shrills my ear with pain ;  
But when I look adown the stream  
Divided soon its waters seem,  
On the other half a darker fringe  
Begirts the land with sombre tinge,  
Which overshadows the whole State  
With threatening frown of Fate.  
But look ! the Heavens light with joy  
This side where lies our Illinois,  
And here the stream transparent flows  
While over there it turbid grows.  
O sympathetic River what aileth thee ?  
Thy spirit voice seems crying me :  
I am half slave, half free,  
Thither I murmur somehow fettered,  
Hither I prattle not to be bettered ;  
And still it gives me my great trouble  
That I have henceforth to run double ;  
My heart I feel in twain is cleft,  
Of happiness I am bereft ;  
Halved in my very unity,  
I am become the foe of me,

And never can I feel myself to be  
Till I am wholly free.  
Unto my hope I was more true  
When only Reds bathed in my view,  
Or rippled me with their canoe.  
But now arrives another race,  
And mirrors in me his pallid face,  
Me rifting with his own affliction,  
I too become the white man's contradiction;  
Proclaiming that rent liberty  
Of man enslaved and free—  
Such split has gotten into me.  
I pray you, take it out,  
And give me peace, O Captain stout;  
You seem the man to do that deed,  
So let the Mississippi too be freed.  
If you but open my flood gates,  
You will enfranchise all the United States.”

When Lincoln heard that ghostly voice  
Foreboding from afar his call,  
He knew not if to tremble or rejoice,  
And still he heard himself in all  
What that strange phantom did unfold,  
Though he had never to himself it told;  
It came upon him like a revelation  
Of life's most deeply hid vocation,  
Of creeds it was his very creed  
Which must in time be answered by the deed.  
So Lincoln viewed his destiny aghast,

That trance of his brought also back the past;  
Along the Ohio's bed he boated,  
And to the Mississippi once he floated,  
Where both the rivers flow as one  
Down to the hot demesnes of sun—  
That was some years agone;  
But memory starts up once more,  
And bids him speak upon that shore:  
“Where both thy struggling sides seemed  
gyved

I in my little craft arrived;  
Each of the shores said just the same,  
Not half and half was then their name,  
That was of this just opposite,  
If here the day, there was the night;  
If here unchained the river laves,  
There both its banks are slaves,  
Up here the stream begins all free  
Then loses half of liberty,  
Until it changes wholly to its other  
Binding its once unfettered brother.

Ah yes! I still can recollect  
In the Ohio's flow I could detect  
That same wee murmur forward fleeing  
Of a divided inner being;  
Kentucky thralled just yonder sighs,  
Free Indiana this side lies.  
Our upper stream must change the lower  
Into itself, or be no more;  
It can not stay half liberated,

The bond and free cannot be mated  
In a perpetual unity,  
All must the one or other be—  
One must, I say, become the all,  
The whole a freeman, or the whole a thrall,  
Let our North-West transform the Nation  
Along with this great River's transforma-  
tion!"

So Lincoln winged his words in farthest flight,  
He seemed to look ahead with second sight,  
And dream himself beyond the Now  
As if to aught unseen he took a vow;  
Anon uprose the river-ghost again  
And echoed back his soul's deep strain:  
"O Captain, Captain, well I see  
Thine is the far futurity;  
And so to thee my aspiration  
I speak concerning all the Nation,  
Hear, then, prophetic Time's decree:  
This upper part of me  
Must move down stream till all alike I be;  
My River, too, in its whole length  
Is to be liberated by thy strength,  
From its headwaters till the mouth,  
From icy North to balmy South;  
This upper part that lower must transform  
E'en though it cost a mighty storm;  
Unless this hap, that lower part  
The upper here will also take

And these free shores unfree will make  
Stabbing our world unto the heart.  
Oh Lincoln, I am the spirit of the River,  
I come to pray thee to deliver  
Me from my present pains  
Which leave me half in chains  
But also from that deadly spot  
Which would my stream-bed wholly blot.  
I feel thou art the man to save  
Me from becoming altogether slave;  
Yea me to liberate now half enthralled,  
To such a task I hear thee called.  
But listen to the word I say:  
'Tis written in the book of destiny  
As I am now, I cannot stay;  
All slave I turn or else all free,  
One or the other, it must be all—  
'Tween half and half can last no wall,  
Though with much cunning it be built  
Such halfness is but labor spilt,  
A bloom of compromise which soon must wilt.  
Of every little thing such is the soul:  
It seeks to be the whole;  
And so too there must live in me  
The whole of liberty.  
Down through my entire latitude  
Both banks are to be freed,  
Or be engyved in servitude;  
So has the soul of History decreed.  
Captain, thy deed was only for the one,

But that for all must too be done;  
Humanity let be thy creed,  
Now universal make thy deed.”

The spirit seemed to disappear,  
Its voice rang long in Lincoln's ear,  
He felt himself in view new born,  
Out of a former state forlorn,  
And with an ecstacy unused  
Thus to himself he mused:  
“O Stream, fain would I make thee whole,  
And disenthral thy river-soul,  
That thou, unshackled as thou here dost roll,  
Course all thy way into the Sea,  
Thy flowing body's sides both free.  
Then one, O River, canst thou be,  
Not halved within the very heart,  
But unified with liberty  
In every throbbing part.  
Would that I might sweep down just now,  
And thee with thy whole self endow;  
But here I turn the other way,  
Although not long I think to stay,  
A little task I have to do  
With it I soon shall hurry through.  
But thou hast roused a deeper dream,  
Which I must tell thee, O my Stream  
Methinks I see this whole North-West  
When it has grown to manhood's best,  
To face about and march along thy banks

In mighty tramp and serried ranks,  
Thy chained doubleness to break,  
Thee one and free to make.  
So will be changed thy entire line  
Transfigured to our new design,  
Though it may bring a great earthquake  
Which will the ancient building shake.”

Then Lincoln faced himself about  
And Southward trod along the shore,  
Into the distance peered he like a scout  
To see what lay before.  
When he had finished his forelook  
Upstream his eye a new direction took,  
His mind too ran the other way  
In deep reflection on a future day,  
And thus he to himself did say:  
“Our States alone in this North-West  
Are the free-born and give the test  
In all our Statehood of what is best—  
Born of the Union and born free  
Without the taint of slavery.  
That Union too, which gave us birth,  
We shall endow with a new worth,  
Tis ours to save and to set free,  
Making the whole quite such as we,  
And so the mother shall our daughter be.  
Thus our North-West emancipates  
Not merely the enthralled South  
Down to the Mississippi’s mouth,

But the entire United States;  
The old as well as new  
I see them all pass through  
This free re-birth of the whole Nation.  
The North is not to be omitted,  
For it too needs a liberation,  
By our North-West must be new-fitted,  
And Yankee-land itself be manumitted.”

So Lincoln spoke unto his heart  
And told the Mississippi's part;  
He heard in it the time's lament  
Over the ever-deepening rent.  
So strong and sudden was his mood  
He felt as if just there he could  
Wheel round and march the other way—  
But that task is to come another day.  
He has to wait and still be steady  
Until the age has gotten ready,  
The people too must groan in discontent  
Until they start the march for betterment.  
That spirit of the River told,  
As down the valley broad it rolled,  
The ailment of the body politic,  
Which was already getting sick  
Of what must be a fatal malady  
Unless he who the healer is to be,  
Appear with the right remedy.  
The sigh of the great stream is heard  
By all the folk in its wide vale,

For in their hearts is whispered that same word

And spoken too the self-same tale.

Their own they feel that same division,

Their own it is to heal the scission

Warring within the double flood

Which shares in human ill or good,

As if great Nature's heart knew sympathy

And hearts of men well understood.

The river-soul is only free

When too the folk-soul has won liberty.

Then the great stream will hold a mirror true

To millions who its waters view,

And who may thus their selfhood see

In its own hell or harmony.

Thus Lincoln paced the middle of night

Until the East shot up its first faint light,

He listened to the fluvial sighs,

Which he would hear out of the ripples rise.

Although his heart still felt the rent

As he turned back into his tent,

He fell asleep and had a dream

Which echoed still the voices of the stream,

But soon appeared to him the Union mother

And brought her children—the new States—

One might be white but black would be its brother;

And still they had to live as mates,

Born in a line each after the other,

Still in one household intermingled  
With all the discords jangle-jingled  
Of the collision of the races  
Told in the color of their faces.

For if one child were born a new free State,  
The next must be a slave at any rate;  
Deep-souled was the maternal pang  
Which through the entire country rang,  
Upstarting from the Capitol  
It shrieked in pain from Congress hall,  
And racked the ears of all  
To farthest border territorial.  
Repeatedly had Lincoln heard  
During his youth such wretched word  
See-sawing the whole land with screams,  
And now he has to hear it in his dreams,  
Concentered to a long dolorous shout  
Which gentle sleep could not put out.  
So up full-willed he sprang awake,  
His fervid sympathy made him quake;  
Godward his hands upraised he both  
And to the Future took an oath:

“O Union-Mother, thou too must be set free  
Of this dire birth of double progeny—  
One white perchance and then one black—  
That turns to bad thy noblest good,  
Damning thy very motherhood,  
To throes of an infernal rack;  
If now thou bear a freeman brave

Thou must in turn bear next a slave.  
I swear it, if Time shall lay the deed on me,  
I shall enfranchise thy maternity.  
This is, I see, the highest liberation,  
This will first make us a free Nation.”  
Such was the oath that Lincoln swore  
Along the Mississippi’s shore,  
Whereat the waters roared more troubled,  
As if they fought themselves redoubled  
On each side of the warring stream:  
At least so ran his day-lit dream.  
But Lincoln soon himself bethought:  
“Now must there something real be wrought:  
Another oath to-day I have to take,  
For I am to be mustered in,  
Which strangely seems to me akin  
To what I pledged for Mother Union’s sake.  
So outwardly diverse each oath!  
And yet one sense must lurk in both.”

At once the sun burst on his face  
As he stepped forth to take his place  
In front of his ranked company  
Who greeted him now merrily,  
But for them he could not dig up a joke,  
Though pleasantly a sober word he spoke:  
“I have to leave you here awhile,  
And go alone a little mile,  
To be sworn into service now—  
’Tis to my country my first vow,

For Uncle Sam and I must be united  
In the heart's pledge not to be slighted,  
By me here and hereafter too,  
Whatever I may have to do,  
A sacred Yes will plight my troth  
When I to him have ta'en the oath  
To bond us aye forever,  
But violated—never.”

## II.

Contemplative now Lincoln started,  
Inside of him the lightning darted  
As through the prairie grass he strode;  
He cared not for the beaten road,  
But went his even way forthright.  
Still everywhere upon his path,  
In a dim wispy sort of light,  
Rose up that bodeful water-wraith  
With its foreshadow fleetly thrown  
And on his future overthrown.  
Beside a foreland oft he stood  
And watched the Mississippi's flood,  
As it would roll out of his view  
It seemed to be quite cut in two,  
And every little orbèd bubble  
Was dancing to his fancy double,  
E'en though all sought one stream to be  
And onward rollick to the Sea;  
But still another shape would not him leave,

Would with the river somehow interweave;  
It was that fleeing woman slave—  
And her he had a hundred times to save  
Out of the double river's watery grave,  
For in his fancy's whirring strain  
She would come up again, again,  
Repeating him that self-same prayer  
Voicing the future's voiceless air.

Headquarters came he to at last  
When he the river Rock had passed,  
A weather-boarded house he stood before  
And heard loud words come out the door,  
In hot but still genteel debate  
Between some officers of State,  
Who showed a sign of coming storm  
In spite of their tight-fitting uniform  
Which they kept buttoned though 'twas warm.  
The stalwart captain of the West  
Felt a fresh throbbing in his breast  
From just a word or two thrown out  
In the discussion round about;  
With awkward strut he gave a wrench  
As he was beckoned to a bench,  
His long legs crooked down to the seat,  
And he drew up his ample feet,  
The knobbed knuckles of his fisted hand  
After his helved maul seemed planned;  
Then slowly crossing his spare shanks  
And bending down his meagre flanks,

Intently there he oped his ear  
The drift of that debate to hear,  
Which roused the more his interest  
As it kept heightening in zest,  
And that same knotty point involved  
Which he for once had just resolved.  
Again turns up in talk two-sided  
Among these officers that inner rent  
Which had his camp erstwhile divided  
To throes of civil discontent.  
These officers—who were they—who?  
Clad in their coats of broadcloth blue—  
Sent far away from home out here  
To this uncivilized frontier?  
Each was a Southern cavalier  
Now neighbored with the volunteer—  
With this chaotic Westerner  
Whose etiquette did not go far,  
He only wished to win the war.  
But still the Rutledge sword he bore  
Whose scabbard scribbled round the floor.

Scarcely had Lincoln touched his coonskin  
cap  
In military grand salute  
Of the backwoods recruit,  
When a Lieutenant gave a slap  
Upon the table board before him there  
With an upstrung bitter air  
And did his sentiments declare:  
“Calhoun I love for his defiance,

I put in Jackson no reliance,  
And I would fight the President,  
If ever troops were by him sent  
Into a sovereign State  
Unless it gave its own consent:  
Such act will have my lasting hate.”  
Lieutenant Davis was that speaking one,  
Forefronted with the name of Jefferson,  
Kentucky gave him birth,  
But that fair land seemed too far North,  
The spirit bade his father emigrate  
Into a still more Southern State,  
So very hot the clime must be,  
Too cold it was in Tennessee,  
Through which the household onward passed  
Until it reached the land at last  
Whose border kissed the warm Gulf Stream  
In passionate sunshiny dream.  
When Davis had flamed out the burning word,  
An officer at once demurred—  
Another young Lieutenant there upstood,  
Who also was of right Kentucky blood;  
He spake with resolution: “No!  
That were our country’s overthrow;  
I shall be found on the other side,  
Such is my oath, such too my pride,  
Obedience to the Union I have sworn,  
I shall obey, as a true Southron born.”

The knightly youth, blue-coated, shoulder-strapped,

For emphasis with pencil tapped  
Upon a book of Tactics which he held  
While from his heart his fervent words up-  
welled.

Lieutenant Robert Anderson  
Gave answer thus to fiery Jefferson  
With flashing eyes that meant the cannon's  
flame,  
If ever such unhappy crisis came—  
No braver man the day beshone,  
In soldier's worth he could not be outdone,  
He too was on this famed frontier  
When Lincoln came a volunteer,  
Who just in time felt all the heat,  
And soon upstraightened in his seat,  
As if he glimpsed a coming fight,  
Which rose between the white and white.  
Some Indians too were present there  
Squatting in corners anywhere  
The talk they could not understand,  
They came as spies against their band,  
In them was seen the red man's strife.  
The Indian took the Indian's life.  
The darkey too is there astir  
A servant has each Southern officer,  
Allowed him by the Army Regulations  
And counted with his other rations.  
Here then, we find again a many-tinted set  
Away from which we cannot somehow get;  
It always will be drawn together

By some unsighted tether;  
And here is marked that deep division  
Which underlies the racial collision.

But now another question rides on top  
And will not let thought's seesaw stop;  
Again Young Anderson, Lieutenant bold,  
His will's strong utterance could not withhold:

“Let not the single State the whole deny  
Of which it is a forming piece,  
Let Caroline not nullify:  
That would be national decease  
Our Union's chain, so we must think  
Is just as strong as its least link.

My dear Kentucky, I dare say,  
Cannot be brought to go that way,  
Will help to put rebellion under  
E'en to the tune of cannon's thunder:  
But never may I see the day!”  
Lincoln again could not sit still  
At that brave resonance of will,  
He fumbles at his sword-hilt with his fingers,  
But feeling it he thoughtful lingers;  
He too was a Kentuckian,  
In him both sides to strive began;  
That State pre-figured the deep rent  
In its two military sons,  
Whose call is war to represent  
Not by their tongues but by their guns;

He scarce could quench his agitation,  
For in the State he felt the Nation.  
But Davis flashed up to respond,  
Of disputation somewhat fond:  
“My native State will follow me  
Whenever strikes the hour of destiny.”  
He spake it out in haughty air  
As he with face firm-knit rose from his chair,  
His thin-lipped mouth in lines of daring cut,  
With fierce resolve would firmly shut;  
Aristocratic his disdain  
Revealed his character’s last strain,  
But Robert Anderson before him there  
Making response, quailed not a hair,  
For also he knew how to dare.  
To Davis then he put this test,  
For of the man he made the quest:  
“Tell me, would you, my friend and mate,  
If called for by the President  
To go in arms down to Palmetto State,  
Obey such summons duly sent  
By chief commander of the Nation—  
Or would you give up your vocation?”  
Lieutenant Davis thus replied  
With lofty mien and doubly dignified:  
“I have already writ my resignation,  
And here it is, you may it read,  
I bide my time in God’s own speed.”  
Whereat out of a pigeon hole  
He plucked a folded paper scroll,

Proceeded then it to unroll:  
"This is my word, next comes my deed  
If there be need."  
Brief and terse shot out his speech  
Which like a bullet just the mark did reach,  
Then spake forthright young Anderson:  
"But I shall stand for Union,  
And keep my country's flag unfurled  
In face of all the world;  
And though thou be my very brother,  
We still may have to fight each other,  
Be it to save our common mother."

But see uprise the Captain tall  
From sitting on his little stool,  
He could not keep himself so small,  
He too must be a member of the school  
Which with a shot had opened in that room,  
Forecasting in its clash a day of doom;  
Though he possessed no rule,  
In every word he heard a distant boom,  
And that last phrase of Anderson  
Would in his memory jump up and run,  
For to the Union-Mother it spoke troth  
To whom he also swore an oath,  
Which had him now with Anderson united,  
Both in a common pledge to Nation plighted.  
And there besides these speaking two  
Stood other gallant men in view,  
High-buttoned in the army's broadcloth blue:

Captain Harney very fine to see,  
Who was born down in Tennessee  
Silent he sat and undecided,  
He seemed within himself divided  
By these disputing officers,  
Who were like him, both Southerners;  
And still another's scabbard glistened  
Along with polished tinsel on his coat;  
There Albert Sidney Johnson listened  
But let no sound escape his throat.  
They all on Captain Lincoln gazed,  
And at his shooting eye-balls were a bit  
amazed;  
Unconsciously a center he had made  
Out of himself yet not a word had said;  
But when he must their gathered glances meet  
He seemed to drop in pieces to his seat.

And still the embers glowed of that debate  
It flared again as if blown on by fate,  
The battle had to be fought out  
Between the two contestants stout;  
Lieutenant Anderson renewed his task:  
“I have another question still to ask—  
There is a fort in Charleston Bay  
Which boldly stands athwart the way  
Of those who would the Government deny,  
And its supremacy with arms defy—  
It rides the waves as if it swam,  
And guards the passage in and out;

That fort belongs to Uncle Sam,  
His loyal ever-watchful scout;  
Fort Sumter is its gracious name,  
Methinks 'tis destined to some fame  
If South Carolina plays this game;  
Already I have had a sort of dream  
That to this fort I might be sent  
By our new President;  
'Tis Andrew Jackson whom I mean  
Who will be chosen at this fall's election,  
Since from his ranks there seems no great  
defection.

Now tell me, Davis, if you resign,  
Would you go down to Caroline  
And join her nullifying band?  
Perchance you might be chosen to com-  
mand"—

The sitting Captain startled at the word  
As if in it the future's voice he heard  
Resounding from afar in dreadful toll  
Which echoed to the bottom of his soul,  
As Davis spoke in sudden gush  
While flamed his face in crimson flush:  
"That is just what I long to do;  
Let come what may—I shall be true."  
He stepped aback as to prepare  
For fighting something in the air  
And slowly emphasized his words with care:  
"Just that is what—I must it say—  
What I expect to do and be some day;

Events are marching all that way  
I tell it not in brag or fun,  
Lieutenant Robert Anderson,  
If you should happen to be there  
And Sumter should resistance dare,  
I would it not a moment spare,  
But open on you all my fire  
Till you surrender—or expire.”  
Advancing boldly to the attack,  
“And I—I would fire back.”  
Said Anderson in sentence brief  
Which seemed to burst up in relief  
Of his loud thumping swollen heart  
As to the door he made a start,  
Leaving to time the dread arbitrament  
For now there could be no true settlement.  
Then Captain Harney followed him away,  
Lieutenant Johnston though would stay,  
Whose sympathy to Davis leaned  
As far as from his action could be gleaned,  
Yet not a word he had to say.

The years will never fail to realize  
Of this debate the prophecies,  
The speakers twain will meet again  
And sing the same old warlike strain  
Yet not in words will it roll o'er,  
But voiced in battle's furious roar.  
The talk revealed anew the time two-sided,  
A people growing up divided,

Nor should we fail this fact to face  
Which turns the winning of the race:  
The Southerners will not unite  
Though they must take part in the fight;  
They cannot get to be as one,  
But stay as Davis or as Anderson.  
To that debate our Captain hearkened  
While all his inner being darkened,  
As if he heard the overture of fate  
Preluding notes of love and hate  
In strains of elemental strife  
Which intertwined his life.  
He felt he saw the very man  
Who was to weave with him the deepest plan  
Of overseeing Providence,  
To whom they both were instruments.  
He sensed himself with Davis bound  
In some fierce wrestle whirling round and  
    round  
Which sped the cycle of its years  
Berained with all the people's tears.  
So Lincoln here with Davis was first mated  
As antitype to be associated  
With him adown all History:  
They cannot part while Time may be.

Lincoln had lapsed into a kind of swoon  
So that he scarcely heard the sound  
Of the Lieutenant's haughty call:  
“What can I do for you, my man?”

It was the voice of Davis to the tall  
Lank visitor whom he began  
With greater interest to scan.  
The dreamy volunteer was far away,  
Whither his soul had fled he could not say;  
A second louder question then upset  
His free fantastic reverie,  
Sternly commanded by the martinet  
He swam back from futurity;  
Lincoln awakened by the din—  
“I came,” he said, “to be sworn in  
As Captain of my Company”  
And told the facts as they might be.  
“Rise from your seat,” was the command,  
And then the words: “Hold up your hand”  
This Lincoln did with outreach high  
As if that clutch hung out the sky  
Over the spruce Lieutenant’s head—  
That awful clutch with digits spread  
Like talons of the American eagle,  
Ready to pounce upon his foxy foe,  
Who cannot always him inveigle  
To fend off final overthrow.  
It was indeed a giant hand  
Which chopped down trees and cleared the  
land,  
Wielding the axe with keenest edge,  
Whirling the maul down on the wedge,  
And with its ponderous master stroke  
It tore the rail out of the oak;

It ditched the bog and cut the road,  
It tamed the monster earth for man's abode.  
That hand rose up the representative  
Of what the West would do or give,  
Belaboring the soil with might  
Gigantic, or, if need be, fight.  
But Lincoln had another hand, the left,  
With which he could of deeds be deft,  
It firmly laid itself upon the hilt  
Which haled the sword of Rutledges,  
As if it might in sudden stress  
Draw for the instant tilt.  
The servant black of Davis stood  
Behind his master not far away  
In a half-frightened attitude,  
As if that hand might drop some day  
And something break—just what he could  
not say.

But Lincoln now spoke out his troth  
In weighty words to back his oath:  
“I swear the Constitution to support  
And to obey the laws.”  
Such was the adjuration short  
Which never was to make a pause  
In maintenance of worthiest cause.  
Whereat he clenched his high-held hand,  
His bony fingers no more outspanned,  
Knotted his knuckles to a fist,

Which, when it smote, the object never  
missed;

He thwacked it down upon the table,  
Which was not made so very stable,  
But patched together of board and buck  
On which lay loose official truck.

That table trembled with a rattle  
The inkstand toppled o'er,  
The sand-box spilled upon the floor,  
The darkey sprang out of the door,  
As if already had begun a battle  
With giant hand dropped from the sky  
In knuckled panoply.

Lieutenant Davis, brave as he was,  
Leaped back amain with startled look,  
Till he observed the sudden cause  
Which him and the whole cabin shook.  
Might he have had some dim forefeeling  
Of a terrific upheld hand  
Which would come down upon the land,  
And send the ages forward reeling  
Upon another course new-planned?  
The act was to the rules contrary,  
It was indeed unmilitary,  
So a rebuke was well in order  
To train this wild folk of the border:  
“Better than that you ought to know,”  
The wroth Lieutenant sternly said,  
But soon calmed to a smiling nod of head:  
“You are a Captain, so now go.”

Lincoln again uprichted straight,  
But with a louder-beating heart,  
And spoke a word which had the toll of fate  
To him who seemed his counterpart:  
“Bethink, that was my first-born oath  
Unto my country sworn forever;  
I meant it somehow for us both,  
Never to be foresworn by me aye never!  
That is my soul’s last creed,  
To be made ever good by deed.”  
At that bold-worded stalwart form  
Davis looked a little storm,  
But still he held from speech aloof,  
Although the edge of a reproof  
He must have felt for his too-telling mouth  
In that debate presageful of the South,  
Heard by this Captain of the mauling fist:  
But each had met his coming man,  
With whom he was bound up in God’s own  
plan,  
Each now first measured his antagonist.  
And so they stood and looked apace,  
Wondering at each other’s face,  
In which each sought the lines to read  
Which might betoken him the driving deed.

A moment each the other eyed,  
When both began to spy outside  
A coming shape to scrutinize,  
Which brought to them a fresh surprise.

Lieutenant Davis quickly bore  
His lissom form out of the hinder door;  
Old Zack he sighted riding down the road,  
And felt within himself a sudden goad  
To keep his person out of view;  
That bared to light another node  
Jointed of circumstances new:  
Why should brave Davis thus backslide  
Just after all his words so haughty—  
With stealthy footstep rearward glide  
As if he had done something naughty?  
But Lincoln moved the officer to meet,  
And him in hearty backwoods style to greet,  
Perchance to speak a welcome word;  
The huge right hand struck a salute,  
Though butternut the Captain's suit,  
Then did he what was dearest and adored:  
He held aloft to Zack the Rutledge sword.

## Canto Eighth.

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### *THE INDIAN TRAGEDY.*

#### I.

On Saukenuk, the Indian town,  
The setting moon's sad eye looked down;  
Paled in the sun-up's waxing glow,  
It seemed a melting ball of snow,  
Which through the Western sky had high been  
    hurled,  
But now it sank a falling world,  
And soon would vanish out of sight  
On the other side into the night,  
While on this side would rise the greater light.  
Between the downing and the upping sun  
The thread of Fate was quickly spun  
And twirled upon Time's rounding reel,  
Which is indeed a fast-revolving wheel.  
For when the Hawk threw back his No,

And dared the generalissimo  
To halt him from his onward way,  
He deemed it wise no longer there to stay.  
Fort Armstrong soon would bring its regi-  
ment  
Of blue coats on a battle bent,  
With musket, sabre, cannon too,  
War's terror-roaring hullabaloo,  
Enough the savage tongue to numb,  
By Indian yell not to be overcome.

So Black Hawk quit fair Saukenuk,  
The village which his tribe forsook,  
Already years that was agone,  
White faces now have tilled it as their own.  
Thence up the river Rock he moved  
Following the channel as if grooved,  
Through a pleasant blooming dale  
Like Paradise in fairy tale.  
While riding on beside the Hawk,  
Francesco Molinar began to talk,  
Loyola's loyalest he was,  
Devoted to his master's cause.  
He hoped to stay the swarming multitude—  
The Anglo-Saxon hateful brood—  
At cost of Indian blood:  
“Where are the many tribes,” he cries,  
Which were upon our path to rise  
And fill with warlike shouts the skies?  
Scarcely a dozen, one by one,

Sneaking in secret quite alone  
Have joined us as we marched along,  
Instead of that vast promised throng  
Extending from far North to South,  
From the Great Lakes to the Ohio's mouth.  
The Winnebagoes are not here  
Except the Prophet and some to him near;  
And if I look around, I cannot see  
A single Potawatomie.”  
Then Black Hawk boldly to him said:  
“No skulking now—I shall go on ahead—  
Before I die, I fain would sate  
In white man’s gore the Indian’s hate:  
That is the pith of this whole war,  
I say it thee, O Molinar,  
Though thine be a Caucasian skin;  
It is the race which stirs both sides within,  
As ye are fair and we are red,  
The souls are wholly opposite,  
And men will never stop this fight  
Till one or the other fall down dead.”  
Thus Black Hawk spake with fierce decision,  
And showed the heart’s own deepest scission  
Involving Molinar with his blood kin,  
Who felt the grind of original sin,  
And would be out of what he there was in.

And now they reach the Prophet’s town,  
Where huts along the stream were strewn  
In medley mixed of man and mud,

But everywhere the April bud  
Was lolling out its double tongue of green  
To lap the rain and sunny sheen,  
Too timid still to let itself be wholly seen  
Full-flounced in its gay dress of spring;  
The frost might stab it with a sting,  
If once the chill North-west should blow  
His icy breath from peaks of snow.  
The busy squaw her patch would plant  
With what of corn and pumpkins she might  
want,  
What she could till of land she took  
Freely, no more, no less,  
Beyond her lot she gave no look,  
But stayed in Indian happiness.  
She told her daily tale of toil  
Without the hunger for the soil  
Which she might clear and cultivate:  
Wherein lay deep the Red Man's fate.  
He knew not how to make his own  
The very land on which was grown  
The bread he had to eat,  
And all his forest's living meat,  
The turkey, squirrel and the deer  
As well as fowls of mead and mere.  
He used the soil as air or water,  
So never rose above the Squatter,  
Higher he never could associate—  
Could form the Tribe but not the State.  
Such was his race's limitation

Which meant with lapse of time cessation.  
When he had come to Prophet's town  
From his high horse the Hawk sprang down  
At that same Indian tenement  
Where he had been some weeks before;  
In pompous strut he passed the door,  
Yet was his head a little bent,  
His hope had far outrun the event  
Which seemed now writing him a zero  
Instead of crowning him his race's hero.  
And so had come again Black Hawk  
To meet the council for a talk.  
And with him came Francesco Molinar  
Who noted well the setting star,  
And felt more keenly now the sin of war.  
The Prophet sleek had too come back,  
Conecit of self he did not lack,  
Although the fort he failed to capture,  
He still could rise into prophetic rapture.

Again there was a synod of the races  
Composed of many-tinted faces  
Within that little savage lair,  
Before which danced Rock River fair.  
The moody hours brought blinding night,  
Within that hut there was no light,  
Upon the mind the sun seemed set  
Spreading the world with melancholy's net.  
How different that former meeting!  
How ominous the present greeting!

Silence now ruled the little crowd  
Which had before been very loud;  
Each tongue had all at once become  
Quite paralyzed and dumb.

The Hawk, the Cloud, and Molinar  
Had naught to say of the great war  
Which was to undo the Anglo-Saxon,  
And e'en reach out to Andrew Jackson  
At Washington, the President:  
So far their fiery bluster went.

But in that group there was not heard  
The tongue which coined the strongest word  
When they had met before,  
And listened to each other's lore.

Audacious Swartface was the man  
Whose brain had hammered out the plan  
Of forming red and black into one State,  
Making the races confederate.

But while they waited, wondering where he  
was,

And whether he had quit the cause,  
His nimble shape slid through the door  
And noiseless took the empty place  
Where he had sat before  
And represented there his race—  
The semi-African Swartface.

But strangely he was not inclined to speak,  
Or savage-worded vengeance wreak  
Upon the white American,  
Nor more bespoke he that great plan

Of crossing the Ohio's waves  
And starting hence to free the slaves.  
But soon the Cloud urged him to talk:  
"You have been taking a long walk;  
Come let us hear your story spoken,  
And be this dreadful silence broken  
Which has been hitherto distressing,  
A mountain nightmare on us pressing.  
Come, Swartface, drive away this spell—  
For you know how to do it well."  
But Swartface hardly bent his head—  
With no great eagerness he said:  
"You are aware, White Cloud my seer,  
I started hence on devious track  
Uncertain if I would come back,  
To find out what the volunteer  
Was doing on this war's frontier.  
I found the approaching regiments  
And lay some time with them in tents,  
And heard the rumor of the camp  
Which often bears prophetic stamp.  
I was disguised in sundry ways;  
The woods I foraged for some days,  
Bringing the turkey and the deer  
The quail and prairie chanticleer.  
And thus I furnished the fresh meat  
Which hungry troops were glad to eat;  
But while I served their daily ration,  
I learned their destination;  
For our Rock River they were bound,

Where the Sauk village was once found.  
The best man of the lot was named  
Lincoln—a Captain whom some blamed  
Because his tender heart would save  
A dark-skinned runaway—a woman slave  
With her little child.”

Here Swartface stopped, his voice grew mild  
And if it had not been for night,  
A tear of his had come to sight.  
He stayed a little his discourse,  
His feelings stopped his voice by force  
The others there kept wondering  
Whether might hurt him anything:  
With Swartface what can be the matter?  
His former self seems not this latter.  
But after-while again he started,  
Another curious fact imparted:  
“When I had brought my game one day  
I found a hubbub under way.  
The camp was in a frenzy boiling,  
I saw the tawney Captain toiling  
With the uproarious multitude,  
Against them all he sworded stood  
Over the surges he lordly towered,  
Behind him low an Indian cowered  
Whom he would save from violence  
Protecting ever innocence  
Though in a savage soul it shone,  
And he should have to stand alone;

To resene from a murderous strife  
A guiltless human life  
That man would dare to risk his own.  
He would not look into the tinted face  
First to observe what was its race  
Before he might protect the weak from  
strong—

The man he is to right the wrong.”  
Swartface up sprang, there clashed within  
His battling soul a dual din  
As if two sides of him had gone to war,  
His falling fought his rising star.  
But hark, Swartface! thy inner roar  
Is echoing just outside the door.

## II.

Searee had been uttered that last word  
When yells of war around were heard;  
All Prophetstown surged in a scare,  
Rumor rode wildly on the air,  
Bringing confusion everywhere.  
The band of Black Hawk sprang to horse,  
And made the helpless tumult worse  
Riding and whooping through the crush  
Of women and children at a rush.  
But when from council came the chief,  
He brought along a mild relief,  
Proclaiming as he galloped up and down:  
“We must at once quit Prophetstown.

Follow along Rock River forth,  
To our old home up in the north  
Where the Great Spirit once came down to  
    tell  
We shall henceforth forever dwell.”  
And so amid the furious clatter  
The council could do naught but scatter,  
Each darted out upon his way,  
For there they could no longer stay;  
But what might be the matter?  
Some days already on his way  
Taylor had started for the fray,  
With his blue-coated regiment,  
To take the Hawk was his intent  
When he had heard his power defied  
By that bold Sachem’s Indian pride,  
Whose answer to Fort Armstrong brought  
Upon the soldiery war’s fever wrought.  
They crossed the Mississippi’s stream  
Straddled upon a horse of steam  
Which danced his way upon the waves  
Until he strode up to the shore,  
Whence he could pass no more,  
And tumbled out his load of braves.  
At once they quit that pleasant strand,  
And started marching through the land;  
They passed the home of Winnemuk,  
Who could not help, though hid, but look,  
Fiery throbs pulse through her heart,  
Glimpsing her soldier-lover thence depart

With knapsack, cartridge-box, and gun—  
What fatal thread in her was spun!  
Her father had in secret sped  
To join the Hawk in ravage red,  
And through the wood the way he took  
Hoping to find the band at Saukenuk.  
If he were captured on the way,  
Not long the soldiers would delay  
Dispatching him at any nook;  
Deep was the dole of Winnemuk.

So Taylor pushed upon the hostile track,  
In war no laggard was old Zaek;  
Thus all the soldiers spelt the name  
Of Zachary Taylor, destined to great fame.  
A man of action with eye-shot steady,  
His fighting title was, "Old Rough and  
Ready."

Above all else he loved to do,  
And what he did was through and through,  
His spirit had the outward bent,  
For speculation cared he not a cent.  
But now a storm has stirred his inner ocean,  
And he is stressed with strong emotion,  
Inward his very soul is rent.  
Lieutenant Davis has wooed and won  
His daughter's heart, and off have run  
To honeymoon the happy pair.  
To Zack it was a sad affair,  
It seemed to slice his heart in twain,

And though he sought to hide his pain.  
His struggle was in vain,  
The sigh would bubble up again.  
The suit he stoutly had forbidden,  
But his command both had o'erridden,  
He was not used to such a degradation  
The father and the soldier knew his station,  
He felt his word and worth denied  
By those most tenderly allied.  
One day he could no longer hold his heart,  
Its bursting throbs he had there to impart:  
“That Davis yet will make a muss,  
Go where he may there is a fuss;  
Among my kin I will none such,  
As officer he talks too much;  
Fonder he seems of party and of faction  
Than of the dutiful soldier's action;  
And now a prophecy I am going to say  
About a lowering future day,  
Come true I hope it never may:  
What he out here has done to me  
He yet will do to all authority,  
Me his superior first he has defied  
His last superior will be yet denied,  
The State above him, come time and tide.  
This one poor parent—only me—  
Let him, if he so chooses, disobey,  
With arrogant audacity  
The universal parent too he will waylay,  
Although I cannot tell the day;

The starry family I mean,  
Which flaps on yonder flag in sunny sheen,  
He will dare rend if it stands in his way.  
When in his soul has riped this seed,  
By him it will be planted in the deed.”  
Thus in his way bespoke old Zack  
Hot on the Indian’s track,  
But in him raged another war  
More fiercely fought by far  
Than all this petty savage scare,  
Which caused him no great care.  
Although he never felt a fear,  
Iron Mars could not keep back a tear,  
Which welled its salted scalding water  
In love of his lost daughter,  
For lost to him and to herself he thought her.

Just while he sate within his tent  
Dreamful of what this trial meant,  
Behold there came a full platoon  
Of soldiers in the uplit moon;  
A Redskin under guard they brought  
Whom skulking in the woods they caught,  
And with him came an Indian maid,  
Who took her place and by him stayed;  
Her face and form had been well-known  
To all Fort Armstrong’s garrison;  
As soon as he a glance there took,  
Old Zack himself knew Winnemuk,  
She who had told her people’s plan

To slay the Bluecoats to a man;  
She dared her race's secret to uncover,  
This act she did for sake of her white lover.  
But now she comes her father's case to plead,  
For he is doomed to die,  
Unless she can divert the deed  
And old Zack somehow mollify,  
Who sent the company away,  
But told her there to stay.  
Her face but not her tongue made moan  
When the sad twain were left alone,  
Both had been stricken by the blow of fate  
By sorrow joined in common human trait.  
The soldier-father's sympathy  
Forefelt the turn of destiny  
In his own sorrow-laden heart,  
Within himself he knew the maiden's part.  
She had in woe set out from home,  
Solitary through wood and field to roam;  
She ran across the grassy prairie,  
Her flight was like that of a fairy,  
Unseen she thrid the frontier's path  
Escaping all the hostile wrath.  
But oh! she could not shun the inner foe,  
Who with her went wherever she might go,  
By him undone whatever she might do.  
Two loves were raging in her heart,  
And gave her more than double smart,  
To father red she was in feeling bound  
With lover white her very life was wound.

The two were now in arms arrayed  
Seeking the combat with each other  
More fell than brother battling brother;  
Against the other each might lift his blade,  
And each the other slay  
Before had passed the day:  
So saw her fantasy the fray.  
Her bursting heart became a battle ground  
On which her father and her lover round and  
round  
Were wrestling in a deadly strife  
Whose stake was life.  
The love of parent and the love of lover  
As bitter foes  
Were fighting all along her path  
And then they rose  
And fought upon the clouds above her  
In furious wrath;  
At every turn, in every little nook  
That struggle never left her look.

Just when the parent had been taken,  
And seemed by all the world forsaken,  
Up to his side the daughter strode  
Arriving by another road,  
And with the soldiers to old Zack she went,  
Where now she stands inside his tent.  
A daughter's silent pleading eyes  
Caused father's heart in him to rise,  
And so he spake in tones full mild:

“What are you doing here my child?”

“I wish to take my parent home

Who hitherwards has come,

I know that he has disobeyed,

This trouble he ought not to have made,

In his own house he should have stayed

Until this fateful war be past,

For many days it cannot last.

Pity a daughter’s sorrow

And send us home to-morrow.”

To father’s heart the plea came nigh

Even a tear surprised the hero’s eye,

And yet he would not let it drop,

The soldier must the parent stop.

But to her spake he tenderly,

He could not quench his sympathy:

“Though I his guilty act forgive,

And let him go with you and live,

He promising to keep the peace,

What pledge have I for his release?

Will he his former ways forsake?

Or will he not his promise break?”

Then Winnemuk rose up to plead

The recompense of her own deed:

“A daughter’s pledge is all that I can give,

Who loves her father and would have him

live;

My service may I not let speak?

My race on yours would vengeance wreak

And plotted just these soldiers all to slay,

And raze Fort Armstrong in a day.  
The plan was well concealed  
Until by me it was revealed;  
I saved you from a bloody death—  
Give back to me my father's breath;  
'Tis all I ask as my own due,  
Remember that my race I quit for you.''

The soldier felt the gratitude  
He owed to her who did such good;  
The parent felt more deeply still  
The daughter in the maid's strong will;  
He saw himself in the Indian chief  
And to himself in him he gave relief;  
He saw his daughter in Winnemuk,  
And in her love for parent pleasure took.  
The Winnebago father then he called  
And to an oath the Indian thralled,  
And sent both out the camp  
Upon their homeward tramp.

Off with a joy went Winnemuk  
As she the hand of parent took,  
And led him through the Bluecoats there  
Who stood around them everywhere.  
But over all her joy a shade  
Winds in the feature of the Indian maid,  
For, as she slowly sauntered out,  
Slyly she cast a glance about  
To glimpse another's longed-for look—  
Torn was the heart of Winnemuk.

Although she now possessed her father dear,  
She still let fall the tear;  
As she beheld a well-known face,  
Delight and dolor ran a race,  
Pursuing one the other like the clouds  
Which belt the sky in sable shrouds.  
Love's hammer pounded in her heart  
For him from whom she now must part,  
And who was sworn to slay her kind:  
That war was fiercely raging in her mind,  
Fate bade her love her race's foe—  
Whichever won, to her was overthrow.  
Daughter and father strode toward home,  
The gleaming sun would somehow gloam,  
His eye looked blood-shot on that day,  
A mist cut all the smile out of his ray  
While trod the twain their way,  
Neither had much to say.

## III.

And now beneath that sultry sun  
The onward march of Taylor is begun,  
Not far from when old Sol sank down  
The Bluecoats were near Prophetstown,  
Their entrance caused that sudden wonder  
Which drove the council chiefs asunder,  
Also the tumult and the scare  
Confounding all the redskins there.  
Black Hawk commanded a retreat

Up the river sped the moccasined feet  
Of squaws with young and aged massed  
But in their hurry hardly knowing  
Whither their front was going.

Still onward, winding, wavering they passed  
Now through the stream-lined wood,  
Now through the creeks and swamps aghast,  
Champing meanwhile a little food.

But how turns out that synod of the races ?  
Never again are seen their faces  
United in their lofty scheme,  
Scattered to the winds they seem  
A dream within a dream.

Swartface, White Cloud and Molinar  
Have dropped the talk and work of war  
And fled out of its path afar.  
So Black Hawk is now left alone  
To reap what he has sown ;  
The Indian bold will never rest—  
Dares Death to do its best.

One of the roads from Prophetstown  
Swartface now by himself turned down,  
Stepped slowly to his surging thought  
Which had in him a resolution wrought:  
“That man I cannot fight—  
That Captain holds my soul, my sight,  
He is to me the only man  
Able the Race to overspan,  
The red and black he dared to save

Just from their yawning grave.  
In my rent soul the black and white  
He harmonized for the first time,  
Giving to one its God-born right,  
Relieving the other of its crime.  
My father and my mother born in me,  
But ever fighting hitherto,  
Begin through him now to agree,  
Yea reconciled they rise to view.  
I am no longer what I was  
That Captain is the moving cause.  
And love for my own wife and child,  
Whom once I quit as cursed,  
Is coming back and makes me mild;  
My life is suddenly reversed.  
As negro-lover he was defamed,  
But that for me he was well named;  
I feel me soften in my hate,  
I must begin my new estate  
Compelling Fate,  
Under that Captain I would soldier be—  
Enlist me in his company  
If ever such a chance should come to me ”  
So Swartface mused along the way,  
Unstrung he seemed for any fray;  
No hurry showed he in his flight,  
He hardly marked his left or right,  
Self-occupied with inner fight.  
For as he quit old Prophetstown,  
He felt he must himself put down,

A change must be from what he was before,  
A crisis going on within he knew  
A palingenesis flashed on his view.  
But he could hardly work it out alone,  
So all his thoughts to one end bore,  
To find the man who first the seed had sown—  
That Captain he must see once more  
Who seemed the time to rise above  
And gave him his first glimpse of love.  
Some questions too he fain would ask,  
For on him had arisen a new task,  
Which would not let him stay in peace  
Until by doing it he found release.

But see White Cloud drop his prophetic  
goods,  
And skip with haste into the woods,  
Whose secret depths full well he knew,  
Oft had he hid in them from view,  
When he might have his prophet-spell,  
Some future action to foretell  
Which the Great Spirit him dictated,  
Though with ambition it was always mated,  
Not now he thinks of being the red Pope,  
His terror speaks another scope;  
Not now will he unite the races  
In one great federation,  
And be high-priest of all the tinted faces,  
His mind schemes now his own salvation;  
He seeks to save just one red skin,

Glad to creep out where he crept in;  
He cannot think of any other—  
Not even of his sacerdotal brother.

But whither shifts Francesco Molinar  
Who had so often blest the war?  
He must have glimpsed a snatch of God,  
Wielding above him a good-sized rod.  
When he beheld the synod parting,  
He was himself not slow in starting,  
Henceforth he knew the red men fated,  
Their life could not be renovated,  
At least not in his pre-formed way,  
So he would there no longer stay.  
He wandered down the River's shore,  
St. Louis found he, but no more  
It held to Spain nor yet to France;  
The mighty scroll of turning circumstance  
Unrolled to him as if in trance;  
The rulers spoke the Saxon tongue,  
Whose every word his ear-drum stung;  
A shade of the Virginia dialect  
The Yankeelander might detect;  
But Molinar cared naught for that,  
He spiteful on this new world spat:  
“Methinks again the barbarous North  
Has poured its teeming millions forth,  
And overwhelmed all civilization  
With fresh Teutonic desolation,  
Worse than the Goths of savage Alarie,

Worse than the Vandal fiends of Genseric;—  
Just here takes place a new destruction  
Of our beloved Rome,  
And of it gleams no hope of reconstruction  
In all the ages still to come.  
Our ethnic struggle here is lost  
Our Church, our State, our Stock must pay  
the cost.  
But haste! I have to seek another home.”  
So Molinar spoke his despair,  
Sigh-laden round him waved the air;  
Still we must think him over-sad,  
The Latin case is not so bad;  
Its culture and its worship will long live,  
For they to man have much to give,  
Yea even to Teutonic foe,  
Who through them must in spirit go  
That he may rise himself to know.  
But Molinar let run his Spanish bent,  
Southward to Texas soon he sped,  
In which a granite-builded settlement  
He thought to make his lasting bed.  
But after not so very long he found  
Fighting Sam Houston on the ground,  
At San Jacinto Molinar  
Must take another bitter bit of war,  
He hardly dared turn round his head  
Until across the Rio Grande he fled,  
And there he stayed in peace some years,  
But Taylor came and the volunteers,

Behold, it is the same old Zack  
In hot pursuit upon his track,  
Again the Saxon drove him out  
At Buena Vista putting him to rout;  
Thence tripped he feately to the Capital  
And perched himself in Montezuma's hall,  
Till Scott took it and him and all.  
Some fifteen years have seemed to be  
Fulfilling Keokuk's prophecy.  
But now the other conflict whirls apace,  
With newest shift of tragedy of race.

## IV.

The Bluecoats found a voided village  
With all its greening fields of tillage;  
Much truck was lying round in waste,  
So panicky had been the haste,  
Pipes, blankets, clothes, and moccasins—  
Still full of corn were many bins.  
But up and on the soldiers pressed,  
To Black Hawk's band they gave no rest,  
With it there could not be a truce,  
They let escape squaw and papoose.  
Some days had passed in this pursuit,  
When suddenly the Indians shoot  
Upon a foraging detail  
Who will at once the foe assail;  
They gather up their little troop  
In answer to the savage whoop;

Of them a sergeant had command,  
Bravely they took their final stand  
Before the larger Indian band  
With cartridge ball to greet it,  
And then with bayonet or knife to meet it  
If once the struggle started hand to hand.  
But who is this—an Indian chief—  
With vengeance in his vicious look?  
He will destroy these men in blue  
And scalp them too,  
Before may come relief.  
The father 'tis of Winnemuk,  
The daughter he again forsook  
He has become forsworn, untrue,  
Slyly he slipped out of her view,  
He watched the moments while she slept  
Out-worn with her fatigue and care,  
Then through the prairie grass he crept,  
Soon sped he far from there.  
When she awoke she was alone,  
The way she knew not he had gone;  
It was another stroke of fate  
Which made her for a moment hesitate  
And her new lot debate:  
“Shall it then be that they must fight—  
The very two whom I love most?  
If that be God’s decree of right,  
Then I am lost.  
My heart is torn in twain  
And bleeds with its own wound again;

In me I hear the fire-arms rattle,  
Methinks I see the bloody battle  
Between two loves in deadly feud;  
I am both sides and I am each,  
Their fury cannot be withstood,  
I cannot them compassion teach,  
So peace has fled beyond my reach.  
I am myself both fires,  
How can I quench their burning ires?  
I know my father has gone back,  
But I can't tell where is his track;  
I breathe but know not why,  
I wonder that I do not die.  
Then it must be I have some task—  
Further I shall not ask.”

So Winnemuk sets out belated  
To save her father from what seems fated;  
That he has gone the Hawk to find  
Is certain in her mind.  
And so she pushes on the way,  
Resting but little day by day,  
Wreathing her soul in hopes and fears,  
She sees the sky rain down its tears,  
Giving to hers a soft reply  
In nature's sympathy.  
But suddenly the crack of guns she hears  
As she a meadow nears;  
She sees two groups of red and white  
In maddest sort of fight.

But soon the Indians take to flight  
Except just one—the chieftain he  
Is wrestling with the Sergeant, each for life;  
In deadly rivalry  
Each has unsheathed his knife,  
And drives the blade into his foe,  
Just to the mark the weapons go.  
Now Winnemuk has come that way,  
Not six rods distant from the fray  
She sees her loves both give the blow,  
And then drop low;  
She now beholds the outer duel  
Which she within had seen, a vision cruel;  
The lover white and father red  
Are lying on a common gory bed;  
The blood of each by other has been shed.  
Prophetic her presentiment  
Has ever pictured such event;  
Up to this day her march of life has led.  
Soon by the side of each she stands,  
And takes both daggers from their hands,  
She plunges both into her heart,  
Fulfilled is now her tragic part.  
She falls with only Heaven for a cover  
Between her father and her lover.  
The love of maiden sought to mediate  
The far-descended racial hate,  
But ran into the jaws of Fate;  
She dreamed somehow she could unite  
With her own tinted kin the white,

But found that they would only fight.  
She lays on both her gentle finger tips,  
Some gasping words aloud she lips:  
“My people are like me—  
This hour my last I see—  
Each stab would take my life—  
The dagger white, the dagger red,  
Each of them cuts me dead  
In their own mutual strife.  
The father slays his daughter  
Just in the lover’s slaughter,  
The lover slays his maiden too  
In slaying parent in her view.”

The army moves upon its track,  
Soon to the spot has come old Zack;  
It was an outpost of his regiment,  
To which the little squad was sent,  
On whom the Indians undetected  
Had sneaked their way quite unexpected.  
The father was first recognized  
By Zack—aye but he was surprised—  
He dimly felt himself just there  
Lying in place of that stabbed Indian,  
His heart throbbed up with the same care  
And life seemed separated but a span  
Joining the father living and the dead;  
An iron tear old Mars then shed.  
But when he saw between them lying  
The lovely Indian maiden dying,

With the two daggers sticking in her breast,  
The thought of his own daughter pierced his  
rest

And drove the silent man to speak  
The doom whereof he saw the wreak—  
Some utterance he had to seek:  
“Can this be she, brave Winnemuk?  
Still in her face there gleams a loving look;  
She bids me think of my own child  
Of whom I too have been beguiled  
Torn from me by another’s love malign,  
Though still she clings, I know, to mine.

Ah, Winnemuk, I seem to see  
In you what now belongs to me;  
That double wound—it is in you—  
But it is in my bosom too;  
And then I see it rend my daughter’s heart,  
That rouses in me a still deeper smart;  
Thy daggers twain point me the same direc-  
tion,

I see her bleed in thy reflection,  
Rent by the same twofold affection.

And though she still has life,  
She soon, I fear may die  
Of this same double strife  
Which seems the doom of destiny,  
O Winnamuk, to thee,  
And aye to me.”

So spake strong Zachary the bluff,

Outside he could be somewhat rough  
E'en when he was most sad,  
But a hot heart he had.  
Just here before his men assembled  
His forceful voice to silence trembled,  
Worded it gave not forth its tone,  
But ran into a soughing moan  
Which the strong soldier soon suppressed,  
Downing the mutiny in his own breast;  
To what he next had planned  
Calmly he gave command:  
“These three here bury in one grave  
In honor of the brave.  
This uniform is our own too,  
A comrade wore it tried and true.  
But that which puts him up above,  
He won this loyal maiden’s love.  
The Indian father lying here  
I somehow feel with to a tear,  
He fell in fighting for his race,  
As parent shows he a yet deeper trace,  
I have to think me in his place.  
But this brave daughter is the heroine,  
Of human tragedy the queen;  
Leave in her heart the twinned daggers,  
My soldier soul her maiden courage stag-  
gers.”  
And so the Bluecoat buried Winnemuk,  
Whose grave his soul with sorrow strook,  
It was her fate two loves to cherish,

Their warfare 'twas which made her perish,  
They fought outside her to her view,  
Before her eyes each other slew;  
They fought within her many a day,  
And could their struggle not allay  
Except in this one way—  
That was the way of easeful death  
Which loosed her ever-battling breath.  
But in her end there seemed to lie  
More than her own fatality,  
Her tomb a doomful shadow cast  
That her own race would follow fast.

## V.

Some slower weeks we now shall skip;  
Over their petty turns just slip,  
Behold the Hawk in prison caged,  
No longer with his war engaged;  
It came to end in a defeat  
Whereby his overthrow was made complete,  
Almost alone he took his flight  
When he had lost his final fight;  
His hiding-place was quickly known  
Some Redskins soon the chieftain caught,  
And to Fort Armstrong he was brought;  
So now a captive he must groan  
In those same walls whose overthrow he  
sought,  
But him a lesson has been taught,

For he has gotten back his own,  
Foretold him oft by Keokuk,  
Of whom he now longs for a look.  
He was betrayed by his red kind,  
So is his deed stamped in his mind,  
Since oft he has for Reds in ambush lain,  
What he has done, he gets through Reds  
again.

His followers to death have mostly gone,  
But he is left to still live on,  
A spectacle for his white foes  
Who gaze at him as round the land he goes,  
A captive still in Indian pride,  
But always with a Bluecoat at his side.

Now let us mark a single circumstance  
Then give Black Hawk a parting glance;  
Again he stands within Fort Armstrong's  
wall

As if he waited for another call;  
Along that island in the stream  
No more he sees the swan-wings gleam  
Of the Great Spirit Manito  
Swooping above the River's flow—  
It has elsewhither fled  
It may be even dead.

While he stood gazing one bright day  
A boat shot out a little bay  
Upon the River's western shore  
Just where he once intended passing o'er

To take the fort and slay the garrison  
Now guarding him with sword and gun.  
Such is the run of fortune's whim:  
The fort he gets not, but the fort gets him.  
Now in that rocking small canoe  
Another Indian comes to view,  
Behold Chief Keokuk once more,  
With face turned toward the fortressed  
shore;  
Of Black Hawk's capture he has heard,  
And now he comes to speak a friendly word,  
Although the two in bitter rivalry  
Had long competed for the chieftaincy.  
Sage Keokuk had been the white man's  
friend,  
In trying days his help would always lend.  
So was he known to all the garrison,  
He never had a promise once betrayed,  
They trusted him in what he said,  
Would him a favor do, could it be done.  
Keokuk begs the Hawk's release  
And pledges him to keep the peace.  
So now behold the rivals twain  
Together paddling their canoe again.  
They reach the lodge of Fox and Sauk  
Along the eddying Iowa,  
Without the gun and tomahawk,  
Composed was too their tonguey fray,  
Which frothed so loud when Black Hawk  
marched away

With haughty rage he outward darted,  
But now he is again just where he started,  
'Twere better he had not begun,  
He would not then have been undone.  
So ends the conflict of Black Hawk,  
Still living as the theme of talk;  
As he has been, the other Reds will be  
And so he types the Indian's tragedy.

## Canto Ninth.

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### *LINCOLN'S RETURN.*

#### I.

“Much have I knocked about in this campaign,  
Have hither thither chased and back again,  
Turning always in a kind of round,  
But not a single Redskin have I found.  
I seem to tread a circled charm  
Which keeps me whirling all the while,  
So that I cannot do a harm,  
The victim of the foeman’s guile,  
Which makes us run to this and that alarm  
To find him distant many a mile.  
Shall I break out this witch’s mill—  
Or shall I treadle in it still?”

And though our battles have been those of  
Quakers,  
We still shall get our hundred acres,  
A warrant for the public land,  
Such is the modesty of our demand.”

Thus Lincoln mused upon his soldiering  
Which turned out such a fruitless thing;  
It seemed as if a sportive spook  
Had led him round in many a crook;  
The marches of successive days  
Him interlinked in one huge maze—  
A kind of treadmill for his sinning  
Which turned him ever to the same beginning.  
Still he had seen along his path  
The bloody signs of savage scath,  
The dripping scalps of slain white-faces  
Bespoke the furious strife of races;  
In him 'arose ancestral wrath  
When he beheld, wherever he might roam,  
The ashes of a frontier home,  
Or forms of children and of wife  
The tomahawk bereft of life;  
But in the skull a bleeding bullet-hole  
Would from the bottom wring his soul  
That born revenge of his to wreak  
Transmitted to him in his blood,  
In spite of that exemplar meek  
Who called up his forgiving mood  
And for his higher nature stood.

But he has reached his stopping-place once more

At Dixon's Ferry on the shore  
Where runs the ripple of a stream  
Which weaves young joy into his dream  
Of his own sunny Sangamon  
Which his New Salem sleeps upon,  
With its high couch along the bluff  
Whereof he could not think enough.  
Nor did he fail to pat his sword,  
And glance upon its graven word  
His thoughts he hardly dared confess  
Nor would he tell what lay in his caress  
Given the sword of Rutledges.

To-morrow is the mustering out,  
But something he did hesitate about;  
His fellow-soldiers were not sad,  
To see their own again they would be glad.  
The most of Lincoln's company  
Already were of service free,  
The weary work of war they quit,  
Jack Kelso had no love for it,  
Could now be found on his old log  
Fishing besunned for perch or frog  
Slaking his thirst betimes with swig of grog.  
But Lincoln was in sober mood  
As he that dancing streamlet viewed;  
He asked himself, see-sawed in doubt:  
"Can I be here of further good?  
I do not like to turn about

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"Can I be here of further good?  
I do not like to turn about

Until I see the war completed,  
Indian Black Hawk is undefeated,  
From such a foe to seem to run  
Is not for me a bit of fun;  
Three times I have set down my name  
Unwon is still the wily game;  
I quiz myself: Shall I enlist again,  
To stay up here till end of the campaign?"  
And so he turned the matter over,  
No answer could he then discover.

Within the camp fantastic joys  
Kept rollicking out of the boys,  
Each fellow had a sweetheart in his home,  
To whom he now would quickly come,  
His soul's desire was to be mated  
With her from whom he had been separated;  
Than war his love had grown much stronger,  
Alone he could not stand it longer,  
And still one day he had to wait  
For his certificate.  
Abe Lincoln, too, abashed New-Salemite,  
Long felt himself to be in that same plight,  
But never would he dare confess it,  
Although he hoped the Lord would bless it.  
Now rose before him sour-faced duty  
Contending with his bosom's beauty,  
Within he heard the double argument  
On what might be the right intent:  
"Methinks I've paid my pledge's price;

Others went off, but I enlisted thrice,  
Keeping the field against the foe:  
Now is it right for me to go?  
The war is not yet ended,  
Unwon the point for which we have con-  
tended,  
The Indian dares to scalp at will,  
In spite of us refusing still  
To cross the Mississippi's bound,  
He flees before he can be found,  
In trailing him he keeps us busy,  
While Stillman's fate has made me dizzy  
With my inherited dislike,  
And the red slayer I long to strike,  
Grandfather mine within my brain  
I see once more by Indian slain,  
That deed is lashing me again.”  
The brook ran wrestling in its bed  
As if it felt a struggle, too,  
Its channeled waters through and through,  
But that eased not the throbbing head  
Of Lincoln in his self's own interview;  
He strolled alone into the wood,  
When all at once a Redskin stood  
Before him with a friendly mien  
Whom he recalled he had once seen  
Unarmed amid a vengeful multitude  
Who sought to let his guiltless blood.

## II.

It was the messenger old Loo,  
Who showed again his spirit true,  
Whom Lincoln rescued from the soldiery,  
And sent him on his errand, free  
To go to Keokuk, the friend  
Of whites, his journey's end.  
To Lincoln here he speaks again  
And tells about the tribal twain,  
The strife between the Hawk and Keokuk,  
What he had kenned in his own look:  
“The Pottawatomies, my nation,  
The chief keeps from participation  
In this too desperate foray:  
Shabbona—you should mark his name—  
What I have thought, he thinks the same.  
Nor will the Winnebagoes all obey  
Their prophet devious in his way;  
White Cloud has grown a little shaky,  
Finding the ground beneath him quaky;  
They also are within divided,  
Like every Indian clan—two-sided—  
And so the tribes have not uprisen;  
Black Hawk himself will soon be lodged in  
prison.  
Another rumor I have learned,  
The dark-stoled priest away has turned,  
And left his victims in the lurch  
Despite the goodness of his church;  
He was a cunning fabricator,

I think the Hawk's chief instigator,  
But when he saw the smallness of the fight,  
He stole away one cloudy night,  
While still his head he could slip loose,  
But left his pupil in the noose.  
So ran the story which I found,  
Perchance a little twisted in its round."

With a brief chuckle in his throat,  
Old Loo took up a different note:  
"I cannot think you wish to lose  
Another little bit of news:  
You could not know that there was sent  
A spy to watch your regiment  
As it marched northward to attack—  
This spy disguised sought out its track  
And played the hunter bronzed in face,  
Although mulatto was his race.  
From Prophetstown in stealth he came,  
Swartface the people coined his name,  
A slave he was once in his day,  
But there he was a runaway;  
Now in your camp he heard the rumor wild:  
You freed a negro mother and her child;  
That raised in him some old fond notion,  
Which stirred far down his strong emotion;  
And he looked at you the very hour  
When me you rescued from the crowd  
Mid murderous menaces and curses loud,  
And sent me guarded off with power.

This Swartface, too, has quit the Indian band,  
Is seen no longer in the Prophet's land,  
Some sort of change has wrought him over,  
A vengeful speech of his could not be heard,  
How furious was his former word!  
Methinks he has turned out a lover.  
I heard him say that you he would not fight,  
And then he quickly slid off into night.”  
Whereat Loo could a smile uncover,  
Which soon lapsed to his gravest line,  
Forelighting up his new design,  
As if he had a secret to impart  
Out of the bottom of his heart;  
He turned to trembling of the voice  
Though hitherto appearing to rejoice;  
And so to Lincoln now began  
In tender tone that Indian :

“One thing I do not like to see,  
You fight my people—that hurts me;  
I love my race, would stay its death—  
I would for it give my last breath;  
And, too, methinks I could for you  
Dare just the self-same deed to do,  
What you have done my life to save  
I could pay back with my own grave.  
But you, I say, are out of place  
Arrayed in war against a race,  
I deem you have another call,  
No more to racial hate the thrall,

I read it even in your face,  
That character of yours bespeaks such grace.  
You saved me once, I would save you,  
I to your destiny am true,  
So hear the prayer of poor old Loo;  
I long to spend my days in peace  
Till Manito sends life's release.  
We redmen should give up this fight,  
And bid ourselves within unite,  
Instead of battling with the stronger,  
Then might we live some ages longer.  
But you I fain would see once more  
'Ere passing to the other shore,  
And though you come the redman's foe,  
That's not your deepest nature, well I know;  
I judge by what you did for me—  
That last dark strain of racial enmity  
You can pluck out of your descent  
And give your whole to your true bent:  
Your call is still to save, not slay;  
Take to your heart what I now say,  
Your message 'tis I bring to-day,  
I, poor old Loo, your Indian friend,  
But faithful to the end."

Then Loo sprang out among the trees,  
Leaping a ditch ten feet with ease,  
But Lincoln, at the sudden visitation,  
Sank soon into his deepest meditation,  
His sword he laid down and his gun,

With them he felt he was now done;  
His thoughts recalled a little book,  
From his breast pocket it he took,  
He glimpsed a verse tuned to his mood,  
Filling his heart with a beatitude.

Himself he then again did interview,  
 Voicing his purpose new:

“The dawning fact to me is plain,

I shall not here enlist again;

I feel it not to be my place,

To help destroy a dying race;

Rather I would now aid it live

If I but knew just what to give.

This Potawatomie, old Loo,

Has told me rightly what to do,

Though he may wear an Indian face,

He has ascended out of race,

With all its ages-aged hate.

That is the human conquest over fate;

And now, attuning with this lesson new,

My life I have to reconstrue,

The fateful heirloom of my ancestor

I can no longer battle for;

I must clean out transmitted spite

Which drives me to keep up this fight;

I have to praise thee, good old Loo,

To thine own blood thou hast been true

But to the truth of all men truer still,

Thou hast exampled me in will.

Henceforth I shall the lower self outclimb,

Though from the father's father to the son  
It has come down to me through time,  
My higher self must now be won."

So Lincoln, when he entered camp,  
Bore on his soul another stamp;  
If now he feels that old blood-stain  
From parent's stock work in his brain,  
He casts it from him, to be free  
Of the grim fates of ancestry.  
And so he conquers his heredity;  
Grandfather's bullet by Indian shot,  
Lay lodged in Lincoln's destined lot;  
Another Indian now has cut it out  
With gentle words and left no scar of doubt;  
Of truth he gains a new beginning,  
Of manhood wins the primal winning,  
The blot transcended of his birth,  
The whole asserted of his human worth.

### III.

Into the fort tall Lincoln strode  
Where stood the officers' abode,  
To be discharged of further obligation  
Of serving in his present station.  
No captain was he now in rank,  
But lofty private lean and lank,  
High towered over all the rest  
That unkempt head which was the best.

But look! what meets his quickened eyes  
Which flash out lightnings of surprise?  
Lieutenant Robert Anderson,  
Of all those officers his favorite one,  
Steps up in soldierly salute,  
And parleys with the rude recruit;  
The blue consorts with butternut,  
Suppressing the West Pointer's strut:

“I recollect your presence well,  
You cast on all a kind of spell,  
When with Lieutenant Davis in debate  
I argued on the nature of our State.”  
Then Lincoln rose to his full height  
And spoke a word far-glanced in sight:  
“When you there said you would fire back,  
I thought I saw the very man  
Who would in time dare that attack  
Which seems to rise into the coming plan.  
Let drown the dream whoever can—  
On Charleston bay a sudden glare  
Beheld I with its hellish flare,  
The scintillating curve of the first shell  
I glimpsed just as it downward fell  
Into the fortress where you stood—  
You answered it the best you could;  
At once the blazes mounted higher;  
The entire sky from that one shot took fire,  
And spread thence over land and ocean,  
The world shook in the deep commotion.”

Lieutenant Anderson sprang back  
As if he heard that future cannon's crack,  
Startled by a wild sonorous dream  
Which still the truth to him might seem.  
Forefeeling far some coming lot  
Upon that fatal spot,  
Collecting all himself he turned  
Unto a present point that burned:  
"Much trouble down in Caroline!  
That haunts me with a face malign  
Forever looking into mine,  
Whereat I often have to start,  
Beholding my demonic counterpart,  
Which comes to challenge me to fight:  
I cannot free me of that sight.  
I seem to hear the President  
Bid me hold out where I was sent  
And if it comes to that, I must—  
I shall not think of failing in my trust;  
Back of my heated argument  
With Davis lay just that intent."

Then Lincoln spake with thoughtful mien,  
Yet with his eyesight flashing keen:  
"Like phantoms—let me too confess—  
Do oft my day and night distress;  
Whenever I may read Calhoun,  
The strife seems coming soon;  
Between his lines there roars a revel  
Begotten of the very Devil,

Who will our Nation disunite  
Preparatory to a fight.  
I read the speech of Senator Hayne  
When Webster tackled him in mighty strain;  
Both spoke the time's protagonists,  
Words to be followed by the fists  
Which hold the sword and gun,  
Until some great new deed be done.  
When men begin in writ to think,  
Blood often courses after ink;  
If once the age its skin will shed,  
The flaying pen runs red.  
Though Jackson be now President  
And publishes his declaration,  
That comes to me a far prefiguration  
Of another stronger proclamation;  
And since I heard that hot debate  
Between yourself and Davis over there,  
Outside I saw the fight of fate  
Upon the glowering air;  
I am become all one prognostication  
Of How and When and Where.”

Thus Lincoln the oracle had spelt  
Which dimly Anderson forefelt,  
As if he might it yet enact  
When the world has gotten ready  
Towhelm it into fact  
Just at the whirling moment's eddy.  
Soon Anderson again spake out

What he was thinking then about:  
“I talked with Davis afterward  
As soon as we had mounted guard;  
You gave him quite a little fluster  
When he had taken you in hand to muster,  
By thumping down your fist with such a clat-  
ter,  
As if you something sought to batter.  
That oath to you he would administer,  
You made him feel it something sinister—  
More deeply than a rude annoyer,  
You seemed to him to turn destroyer.”  
To this replied gigantic Abraham:  
“You tell exactly what I am;  
When I behold him and his like,  
Such speeches make me boldly strike;  
So I fetched down my fist before me  
When he unto the Constitution swore me;  
Calhoun’s successor he may be,  
And execute the same decree;  
Methinks he showed a high ambition  
Which may in years come to fruition,  
And of our Union’s overthrow  
He may be generalissimo.  
That keen discussion started up in me  
An undecurrent of antipathy,  
Which makes me deeply hesitate  
About my peaceful Quaker trait—  
Or am I born to war’s estate?  
My eyes first looked on old Kentucky,

That loyal commonwealth and lucky,  
E'en if she Davis bore with me  
In double strange maternity.  
He ought indeed to be my brother  
If she of both of us be mother;  
Again 'tis Cain and Abel's story,  
Whereby the Bible even opens gory.”

Then Anderson gave answer straight:  
“Kentucky is my native state,  
As well as that of Davis and of you,  
And I shall stay there through,  
To my dear homeland ever true;  
It seems the center of this nation,  
Whence ray the courses of migration,  
Dividing into south and north  
Its hardy sons have wandered forth;  
Davis and you have gone to roam,  
Far from your old Kentucky home;  
Gulfward he has moved to stay,  
But you have turned the other way,  
Into this level free northwest,  
Now settling up with mighty zest  
That soon it will be peopled more  
Than our Kentucky starting years before,  
Though she be still the only key  
Which locks the nation into unity,  
With all its separate states both north and  
south,  
From Maine to Mississippi's mouth.”

“That is my view, I do agree,”  
Said Lincoln in a note of glee,  
“And with that new Kentucky key  
The President will lock this nation  
Into a newly bonded federation  
Which will—the whole of it—be free.”

Lieutenant Anderson somewhat demurred  
To this far-off prophetic word,  
But let it pass with look of wonder  
As if he heard a distant clap of thunder.  
Still he could not escape the spell,  
He too must dare somewhat foretell:  
“Now you and Davis move just opposite,  
Between you two may be the fight;  
Already you have gone apart so far,  
That if you two be leaders, there is war.  
But in the middle let me stay  
Hoping against the fatal day.”  
So gauged Lieutenant Robert Anderson  
The men twinned deep in destiny,  
The makers of the new World’s History,  
Whose deeds were coming on the run,  
Which also he would have to face.

But now he turned aside the talk with grace  
To something then just taking place:  
“The pretty daughter of old Zack  
Jeff has been bravely wooing,  
And cannot be thrown off the track

But keeps defiantly pursuing,  
And dares even to jaw back.  
The father scorns such son-in-law,  
Regarding him a jack-of-straw  
Strutting about in uniform,  
But impudent and disputatious,  
Bound at some day to raise a storm  
With his big tongue of words fallacious.  
Old Rough and Ready is a curious fellow,  
Though often harsh; can turn to mellow;  
He questions slavery in this nation  
But works three hundred slaves on his planta-  
tion.  
But Davis will retain the daughter,  
E'en though it come to parent's slaughter,  
He will defy old Zachary,  
Who can him but his house deny,  
Which will do little good  
In softening those lovers' mood.  
And this I say of Jefferson,  
Just what he has to his superior done,  
He to his country all will do  
'Ere he gets through.  
Such characters as his seem bound  
To run of life the complete round  
Ere they be put beneath the ground."  
To Lincoln's soul these words went home  
Shedding a sort of shadowy gloam;  
He hardly knew which was the way  
He felt just then—to curse or pray;

The other of it might be either,  
So he did neither.

A word from him was far to seek,  
Still out the silences he tried to speak:  
"Yes, I shall watch the rest of his career,  
In spite of me I shiver with a secret fear  
Of something which I cannot tell,  
And yet it puts me in a little Hell,  
Whose far-off brimstone I can even smell."

Therewith Abe Lincoln made his long legs  
spin

A rapid march till he was out of sight  
Of those blue-coated gentlemen  
Whose duty sole it was to fight;  
At present he might deem himself dis-  
charged,

Yet really he knew his service but enlarged,  
Till a new order was by time unsealed  
When he again would have to take the field.  
While on the path he quickly went,  
Welled up his fresh presentiment:

"Davis again may muster me  
For a much longer war  
And deadlier by far—  
But I may have to muster him—I see."  
So Lincoln came to know the officers  
Whom the whole Nation deemed as hers,  
And nearly all were Southerners;  
In them he saw the inner scission

Which sometime might lead to division,  
He caught the spirit of the regular,  
And measured him for war.

He felt himself in strange condition,  
Within he heard the far monition,  
What was to come lurked in his soul  
And seemed his life-line to control.

But so it comes once more about  
That Abraham is mustered out,  
He treads in haste along the way  
To find his friends without delay;  
He soundly sleeps with them that night  
Along Rock river's purling stream,  
Till soft Aurora's rosy gleam  
Awakes him in another plight,  
For when he goes to mount his steed, 'tis  
gone—

Stolen before the dawn.

Others were in the selfsame case,  
Still they put on a happy face,  
For they were going home right off,  
So what's the use to sulk or scoff?  
Still Lincoln spoke a word unsought  
Indexing well his thought.

“Good uncle Jimmy, how shall I hail him  
When I again shall see New Salem?  
His nag I cannot now restore,  
It neighs for me no more;  
But here still hangs my loyal sword,

To its high owner I shall keep my word,  
And hand it back to that fair maid  
Who guiding me drew forth the blade.”  
Thence all the way he had to walk  
Enlivening the time with talk,  
He oped the bag of anecdote  
Of which the old ones he would quote;  
But the bran-new ones also started,  
Which he with double zest imparted;  
For they were coined from his experiences,  
What he had sensed with all his senses,  
And even a kind of Iliad  
Made of this Black Hawk war he had,  
A string of stories strung somehow  
From starting-point awhirl till now  
Out of New Salem it did move  
Northward wherever he might rove,  
A hundred turns it curved around  
And out of each would peep a jest,  
Which pricked to laughter every breast,  
And so the tune ran on a bound.

## IV.

As Lincoln and his comrades sped  
Along the road, they saw ahead  
A single shape of man who stood  
And waited for them near a wood  
Out of whose thicket he had crept  
From leafy bed where he had slept.

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Well armed with pistol and with knife,  
And eke a gun he held to guard his life;  
He made no sign of showing fight  
He would have peace if in his might;  
A visage dark but keen and bold,  
His hair a cap did quite enfold  
So that its curls could not be seen,  
In shade he stood out of the sheen;  
Some prairie chickens he had shot  
He gave them to that tired knot  
Of ravenous three men;  
Two turned to cook their supper then,  
But he and Lincoln got into a talk,  
And soon they took a little walk,  
The comer new 'gan speaking lower,  
The words fell from him slower,  
“I heard them call you Abe today,  
Are you not Captain Lincoln, pray?  
To see you has been long my plan  
Old Loo declared you were the man—  
You saved him from a bloody fate,  
I saw you too, at your own risk—  
That hunter there was I—you did him whisk  
Out of a band of men irate,  
Then sent him off safe from their hate.  
And to that woman black and child  
You were a guardian angel mild,  
So told me Loo, the Potawatomie,  
Of Indian blood the best was he—  
The noblest of his savage race,

He had a touch of Heaven's grace,  
He would a life of service lead,  
Which he was taught by Johnny Appleseed.  
He said to me in confidence,  
No red-skin understood his sense;  
Still he would help his people in their need."

Then Swartface of a sudden stood,  
He had come to the deepest wood,  
Above a whisper scarce he spoke,  
And yet in it was heard the tender stroke,  
As if to Lincoln there he would unscroll  
The hidden writ upon his soul:  
"That negress and her little boy  
Are haunting me with pain and joy;  
I heard about them from your men,  
And now they will not quit my ken;  
Lincoln, a secret let me tell to thee,  
I am a man by law unfree,  
Half-black my coursing blood, half-white—  
In me two races clinch and fight.  
Know that I am a runaway,  
And still the price of bondage I must pay  
For which I never promise gave;  
My swarthy mother was a slave  
My lordly father such could never be,  
And so the twain collide in me.  
In old Kentucky left behind  
My wife and child passed out of mind;  
But now to me they are called back

By what I've heard about your deed,  
In which a mother and her babe were freed;  
How can I come upon their track?  
I fain would know—they may be mine—  
Cannot you speak to me some sign?"

Then Lincoln told him the whole fact,  
And spoke of Quaker Ellwood's act,  
Describing too the latter's residence,  
Then gave his words another sense:  
"But go along with us today,  
To furnish food upon the way,  
All of our weapons have been taken,  
We are a trio quite forsaken,  
This sword must never leave my side  
Whatever may betide,  
It is to me the dearest token  
To bring it home I have forespoken."  
Still told his changed mind Swartface:  
"The Indian is a dying race  
To whites they are not half so much the prey  
As to themselves—they one another slay—  
With them I shall no longer stay.  
No hand can help—I have it tried—  
That race is bound for suicide,  
And soon will reach their destination,  
Not far off now is their last station.  
Among them I have lived for years  
And shared their race's hopes and fears,  
Faithful I served them as I could

And found that I could no good.  
I tell you something deepest in my heart  
Which bids me feel your coming part:  
When you saved Loo the Indian,  
Still more when you turned free the African,  
You rose in me the races' man."

Then Lincoln said: "It is far in the night,  
The hours have bidden us to sleep,  
And snatch a dream out of the Future's keep,  
Tomorrow with the sun will come the light."

Swartface remained among the three,  
Lincoln alone knew of his pedigree,  
But kept it hidden from the rest  
Who ne'er suspected in their guest  
The tainted strain of negro blood,  
Which he knew how in stealth to hood—  
He mostly at a distance kept  
And through the forest slyly crept  
Hunting to find for them some game;  
At dusk again to camp he came,  
While others slept and snored outright,  
With Lincoln he would talk by night;  
And so he passed some thoughtful days  
As if he studied in a school  
Remodeling his spirit's ways,  
Which now he deems those of a fool.  
One evening Lincoln all at once spoke out:  
"I now recall what once you asked about,  
Of that slave-mother's mien some sign,

Some mark of body or some salient line.  
I recollect a tufted mole  
Suspended crisply on her chin,  
As if to notify her bronzed skin:  
This mole would work a little spell  
When down to it a furrowed tear would roll  
And gleam a moment ere it fell.”  
But hardly had the word been spoken  
When Swartface leaped and lisped: “That  
is the token!  
What I must do now, well I know,  
I spy the way I have to go;  
Good Lincoln, you have set me right.  
Farewell! I must be off tonight,  
An outer slavery I had,  
My inner slavery was just as bad,  
My hate of family, my hate of you,  
My hate e'en of myself I have fought  
through:  
Both by your word and by your deed,  
Lincoln, liberator, you have me freed.”

## V.

The other men had gone their way,  
Each homeward turned that very day  
And so it happed that Lincoln forward trode  
Without companions of the road;  
He sauntered dreamily alone,  
The July sun his path beshone;  
The case of that new runaway

Brought his foreboding into play.  
Through a small puncture in Time's walls  
Between the Future and the Past there falls  
An ever-roaring double stream—  
Flowing forward-backward it doth seem—  
It is the Now half fact half dream,  
Through it is Lincoln borne to what will be  
And glimpses veiled futurity,  
But to the Present ever is whirled back,  
He has to tread inside his track.  
Along a sluggish creek he wends  
Which crooks about in many bends,  
And oft is in itself divided,  
Going its watery way two-sided,  
Bosoming many islets green  
On one of which some trees are seen  
Well laden with their fruited treasure  
Giving to all with Nature's measure.  
The country was a prairie blank  
Covered with grasses tall and rank,  
Which fire consumed once every year  
Scarce leaving there an herby spear;  
But that green islet was a spot protected,  
By human foresight well selected  
For that small orchard on it growing,  
And now its fruit to mortals showing,  
Who ate thereof in prayerful pleasure,  
Minding a miracle they could not measure.

The riddle Lincoln sought to grapple  
Just as he bit into an apple

Which had an old familiar taste:  
“What brought it to this untamed waste  
So many, many years ago?  
It must have had the time to grow.  
Who was the providential man  
Whose brain was stamped with such a plan—  
Forethought this tree beset with dangers,  
Fire, flood, wild beasts, the prairie’s rangers?  
Me thinks a story once I heard  
Of such a man, to such deeds stirred,  
Dear me! I may have met him too,  
If memory plays me not untrue,  
Those apple trees I oft have seen  
In screened nook where I have been;  
There is a presence with them here.  
I see it not, but it is near.”  
Some steps he took along the shore  
Sunk in himself down to the core;  
A little skiff came up which bore  
One person gliding on the stream  
And scanning sharply every place,  
Yet with a kindly look upon his face,  
Which glanced a message in its gleam.  
Not very stanch was framed the craft,  
Waddled about from fore to aft,  
Slipping its path through bending reeds  
It bore some sacks of apple seeds.  
“Will you not take me in your boat?  
Homeward with you I wish to float.”  
“Just the man I wish to see,  
Come take your seat and plant with me.”

The pair soon sped into the Illinois  
Leaving the little creek behind,  
And glided on in mutual joy,  
While they each other sought to find  
By penetrating to the mind;  
Once Lincoln raised aloft his ear  
A ringed water snake to smite,  
His mate had halted him before  
His blow upon that wriggling coil could light,  
Saying: "Why start an endless strife?  
That is a piece of universal life,  
You never can get rid of such a fight."  
The man harmed not a living creature  
He seemed to know each little feature  
Which lined the face of good old Mother Nat  
ure.

With whom he lived in subtle sympathy  
And heard her voice in every tree  
"I turn her to the friend of man,"  
He said, "though often deemed the foe;  
'Tis she who carries out my plan,  
And makes the planted seeds to grow.  
When she is loved, she will kiss back,  
If to her love you know the knack.  
This law to me is not a fable;  
Nature at heart is charitable."

Lincoln bethought the turn of speech,  
That voice seemed out the Past to reach  
"I must have heard you long ago."

But where it was I do not know.”

“So you before to me have spoken:

The fact I think I can you token”

Quoth with a backward glance the man,

Then delving in himself began:

“Now if you wish to solve this riddle,

Just see yourself in the Ohio’s middle

On your flat-boat bob up and down,

’Twas there we came in sight together

And both our crafts and souls did tether;

We had just turned a little town,

And reached the river at its mouth,

From which you kept on going South,

While I wheeled slowly up the turbid torrent

Fleeing that lower stream to me abhorrent,

Just where on both its shores it laves

A land of slaves.

In all our talk we did agree

Insouled in one deep harmony.

You spoke of that Ohio stream

And titled it half-slave half-free,

While of its liberation you would dream

Addressing it while rolling past:

“This halfness of you cannot last.”

Those words I never could forget,

They seem to designate you yet,

And whisper too the future man,

Foretokening his ripest plan.”

The repartee hit Lincoln home

He wondered who so far could roam:

“You have not told me whence you came,  
Nor mentioned yet your name.”

“You have to know me in my deed  
That is for me the only meed.”

Then suddenly he pulled the oar,  
And ran his boat upon the shore  
Where a young orchard had struck root,  
And smiled with ruddy ripening fruit;  
There under the full tops of trees  
Looked up a way-worn emigrant  
Plucking whatever might him please,  
And eating of it at his ease,  
Since fare to him was somewhat scant;  
Not far away his tented wagon stood,  
His wife and children sharing that new food,  
Which they had never planted even,  
It fell to them as if from Heaven,  
So all their faces had the air  
Of feeling though not voicing prayer.

To Lincoln now spoke up his mate:  
“This stranger has aught to relate  
About his trip up to this date;  
He can answer what you ask,  
I know him not—he knows my task.”

The emigrant now starts to tell  
What him in wandering befell,  
As he sped onward through the land—  
A wilderness unroaded and unplanned;  
Facing in hope the sunset ray

He fared along his westering way;  
Still when he reached a river's shore  
He found somebody had been there before,  
And left a little helpful store.  
“I crossed the Alleghanies bleak  
A home for me and mine to seek”—  
He spake with look of reverence;  
“Already on the Ohio river  
I found the gift of some good giver  
Just in the pinch of Providence;  
On the Muskingum too he left his trace  
In many a little work of grace;  
And the Scioto showed his hand  
In growing orchards on its strand;  
When we the distant Wabash reached,  
The self-same sermon there was preached;  
And now out here on the Illinois  
You see me that same soul enjoy.  
Upon this fact the people have descended,  
They say it is one man who planted  
All such far-strayed fruit-bearing trees,  
And seems to be and do what he may please;  
They make him young, they make him old,  
They make him dead, they make him living,  
And of him marvelous tales are told,  
For everywhere is found his giving,  
He seems all time, he seems all space,  
Is every kin and every race,  
Upon this western world is stamped his trace;  
Through all these stories runs one plan

Featuring the universal man.”  
“What is his name,” then Lincoln cried  
Drawing nearer to the speaker’s side:  
“Upon this point all are agreed—  
They call him Johnny Appleseed.  
But more than one he is to me  
A multitude he seems to be,  
Perchance one spirit in all his transforma-  
tions,  
One Christ in many incarnations.”

At once the wanderer sprang to his boat,  
Prepared himself to set afloat;  
Lincoln musing followed slower,  
But soon he took the part of rower,  
And both again down stream were gliding,  
Over the watery surface riding;  
Each seemed in silence to reflect  
On what they just had heard;  
The younger would the sense detect  
Couched in the emigrant’s last word.  
Anon the wanderer looked up to say  
The weighty thought which in him lay.  
Now Lincoln when he saw the man was ready  
No longer oared the boat,  
But let it simply float,  
Yet sought to make his soul more steady,  
Intoning in his heart a gentle note:  
“I see you are a spirit good,  
And still I have not understood

Why all your days you long to roam  
And seem to have no settled home.  
Thou new knight-errant of the West  
Tell me, what is thy lofty quest?"

That was of questions just the test —  
The wanderer at once spoke out  
For of himself he showed no doubt:  
"Dear friend, I note in every argument  
You take to story-telling as your bent,  
And as you better see within a vail,  
So I shall tell me in a little tale:  
I am a knight of the Holy Grail—  
The Holy Grail American  
Containing the new Sacrament,  
'Tis the one task of my life's plan,  
The service on which I am sent.  
The ancient knight essayed the pure—  
Pure in his thought and word and deed,  
Of Heaven felt he quite secure  
If he in life fulfilled that creed.  
It was a training excellent,  
But to himself alone it bent;  
His worth became a narrow pride  
Which wrapped him in his little hide,  
And on himself his virtues spent,  
But somehow he must get outside,  
Fling off his own integument.  
So he will reach his deeper mind  
That his true self anew he find

His goodness must in might break forth  
And give itself unto the other,  
For virtue has not virtue's worth  
Unless imparted to the brother;  
Yet even this is not the highest height  
Another excellence has dawned in sight.”

The stranger looked up at the sky  
A far-off forelook trembled in his eye.  
While he continued slowly speaking  
As if the better word he might be seeking:  
“Kind charity may turn to very pelf,  
Unless it helps the hand to help itself,  
Hamstrung would be the human deed  
If man should get outright just to his need;  
You ask of me my mission to reveal:  
I give my life to the common weal,  
Not to this single one alone;  
Each has to come and take his own,  
By his free will this must be done.  
And so my little plot I plant  
For all to satisfy their want;  
I give unto the whole community  
Each worthy striver's opportunity,  
Embracing all of them I can—  
I wish it were the genus man—  
And if I owned Almighty's sanity,  
I had included all humanity.”

On vacancy young Lincoln gazes  
Trying to catch the far-off fleeting phrases,

And make them speak their meaning out  
In some plain words he knows about;  
The stranger then begins again  
And fantasies anew his deeper strain:  
“The leper I have found in many a story,  
Whom poets crown with greater glory  
Lying in rags along the way  
Where he is wont for alms to pray.  
How came the leper there, is what I ask,  
And with the question dawns the larger task;  
I must look after him before  
He lies a beggar at my door,  
Nay, I must deem myself a sleeper  
Until I stop his being leper.”

The man then inward turned with look and  
speech,  
And in another vein began to teach:  
“Not barely to the individual—  
I seek to give to all;  
Yet charity to fallen man  
I often have at once to give  
That the unfortunate may live:  
But shall I not preclude his fall?  
Begin at least I must and can.  
’Tis thus I hear my farthest call,  
To realize my plan.”  
The stranger saw himself unsighted,  
By his too-youthful auditor,  
And so his speech anew he lighted

With flashing tale and metaphor,  
Would even turn a rhymed line  
To make the point the brighter shine.  
But when he wished to show the pith,  
He would re-build an olden myth,  
Transfigure it with newest fact  
So that it gleamed the very act.  
Dreamily Lincoln comprehended,  
He tried to girdle in his brain  
The thought which had so far transcended  
The little world of gain and pain.  
Gravely the wanderer looked about,  
He saw the youth bedimmed with doubt  
And deemed this was the time to try  
A little bit of his theology:  
"To give through Christ to the leper faint  
Has been the worthy deed of Saint;  
To give your selfhood with your gift,  
Is even a still higher lift,  
Which hoists you to the presence of the Lord  
Who breathes you now his very word:  
For you no longer see the leper  
But in his stead the universal keeper.  
Yet the good Lord, just to be good  
Needs you, when he is rightly understood,  
As you need him to be your own,  
And never by the world o'erthrown.  
So dawns an ever-loftier living  
New-born of a still mightier giving.  
Of life I say you my solution:

I give my own, myself to all,  
Both as the master and the thrall,  
To build the institution.”

Among the bushes flees and disappears  
A Redskin driven by his fears;  
Just there the stranger turned the boat  
ashore

Saying: “Our journey is now o'er,  
An Indian village lies behind this wood,  
Where I perchance can do a little good,  
Keeping its people from this strife  
Which threatens their whole race's life.  
Thither I must now quickly pass  
Leaving my boat hid in this grass.  
Yonder your path you will espy;  
O friend, to you I feel me nigh,  
But here I have to say good-bye.”

They parted. Lincoln's tread was slow,  
A world within him rose to overflow;  
Exalted to a new-born vision,  
Forecasting what may be his mission,  
He looked around in his afterglow  
He could not tell why he did so.  
But see the shape just over there!  
The wanderer floats on the air,  
He seems to shift his inner self outside  
As if to body he no more is tied,  
His head has changed to several faces,

Each gifted with a tint its own  
In which lurks character ingrown—  
The incarnation of the races.  
And yet they all are one in blood  
Coursing its way within that form  
In whose one heart they all beat warm  
With universal brotherhood.  
The racial difference of Nature's plan  
Rounds unified within that man,  
Whose members turn a radiant scroll  
Gleaming humanity's one soul.  
So Lincoln glimpsed his deepest creed  
As he that vision saw unroll,  
And he forefelt his greatest deed  
Viewing transfigured Johnny Appleseed.

## Canto Tenth.

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### *HOME AGAIN.*

#### I.

Time tags along in lazy love,  
Sunning himself upon the prairie;  
While turbaned clouds march through the  
dome above  
With serried order military,  
Holding a lofty dress parade  
In fleecy folds of white arrayed  
Before their lordly luminary;  
And so the home-bound soldier's eyes  
Behold his regiment up in the skies.  
The Summer seethed with hottest ray,  
As lonely Lincoln went his way  
Which on the greenery's open face  
Around zigzagged a wrinkled trace.  
Heaven's kettle filled with molten beams,

The Sun upturned and poured in streams  
Which fell a blazing cataract,  
Unless a cloudlet stayed his aet  
A little moment in between,  
Patching the plain with shade and sheen.  
A blacksmith's shop was Lincoln's soul  
The future forging stroke by stroke,  
Full both of sparkles and of smoke,  
At times there gleamed to him his goal,  
And then the soot would make him choke.  
The sweetest milk fair Hope unsought  
Would pour him from the world of thought;  
But soon by some new current stirred  
The stuff would turn to sourest eurd;  
Then just the other way would run his  
dream,  
On bonyclabber still would rise the cream.

Edging a pretty patch of wood  
From home not many miles he stood,  
Within whose shade the time he took  
To give a backward look;  
Relating what he had passed through  
Unto himself in pensive view:  
“Only three months have I been gone,  
And yet the minutes have been drawn  
To hours, yea, almost to days,  
So full of haps have run the ways,  
Entangling me in tortuous maze;  
It seems as long as all my former years

As to its close it nears;  
I scarce can sleuth myself through its brief  
past,  
The wheels have run so fast.  
My acts in this wee Black Hawk war  
Resound already to me from afar,  
They speak a wordless voice of presage,  
Which tells me still its message,  
I seem in small to pre-enact  
What is to be the largest fact,  
In such a world I never moved before,  
So full of weird prophetic lore,  
Its small events of petty worth  
Foreshadow some gigantic birth,  
I breathe, methinks, a pictured air  
On which I read the future everywhere,  
This miniature of Indian strife  
Has made me glimpse my entire life,  
What I have done, I yet must do,  
The past I have still to go through,  
The jailor Time handcuffs not me  
I slip his fetters to futurity.  
But stop, my soul, this mood fictitious,  
I know me somewhat superstitious.”

So Lincoln stopped presentiment  
Though woven in his every bent,  
The demon Care he would outfence  
By falling back on common sense,  
Or jetting forth a little eloquence,

Which might his melancholy buffet,  
If just by blowing he could puff it;  
He wandered off in various vein,  
But to himself came back again:  
“That fugitive slave mother,  
Whom I would not permit to be sent back,  
Benights my soul with brooding bother;  
I have no respite from attack  
When two laws start to fight each other;  
The first compels me from within  
And makes obedience a sin,  
The second bids me from without,  
And will not suffer me to doubt.  
Although I freed the fleeing slave,  
Myself I did not save.  
And then this case of Indian Loo  
With conflict ran me through and through;  
I could not bear to see him wronged  
By my own people round him thronged;  
Though on the march to fight his race  
The human I would not efface.

But that which came to me like Fate  
Was when I heard the hot debate  
That day between the valiant two  
Young army officers in blue.  
They seemed to split the very nation  
Along the lines of their argumentation;  
In them the Union fell divided  
And fighting with itself two-sided;

That picture haunts me everywhere,  
I hear the hurtle in the air,  
And see the bluecoats battling there—  
Millions have sprung out of those two,  
Somehow I seem the center of ado,  
And can't escape the spectral hullabaloo.”  
Then Lincoln cast ahead his look  
And sought his pace to hurry,  
As if to flee from persecuting worry  
While gentler lines his semblance took:  
“But this is my chief wonderment,  
At the right moment word is sent;  
There speaks me from beyond somewhence  
A messenger of Providence,  
He drops down at the turn of danger  
As if he were the universe’s ranger,  
Planting upon his path his seeds  
And yet to me much greater are his deeds—  
Himself has interwoven all my way  
From the first day.”  
As Lincoln lisped the blessed word,  
The rustle of his sword he heard,  
Sword of the valiant Rutledges,  
Which he had kept through all his stress  
Merrily dangling at his side,  
And gleaming there ancestral pride;  
It seemed to tune a gentle clang,  
Soft-voiced as if a maiden sang  
Along his path unto his heart  
Her loving whisper to impart.

His hand reached for that sword of Rut-  
ledges  
And gave to it a soft caress  
Which stirred the brightest memory  
Of all his days that had gone by.  
But a still smaller voice he heard  
Tongued somehow from that speechless  
sword,  
With which his heaving breast could hardly  
cope—  
It was the voice of hope.

New Salem was not far away  
He dreamed another festal day,  
Like that on which he had set out  
To run his martial roundabout  
Just back to where he had begun—  
So would the circling deed be done.  
But in returning to its primal root  
The rounded season brings new fruit;  
The Rutledge blade he would restore,  
Receiving for it something more.  
Upborne he reveries the past  
And paints the future coming fast  
With all its rainbows arching over,  
Sunclad his soul with hope of lover.  
Then Lincoln spake unto his brand,  
As he in turn its trappings scanned;  
He even drew the gleaming blade,  
Whereat this little speech he made:

“Glad that I used thee not—  
Not once upon a human being—  
It would have left on me a blot  
To stain thee in my seeing;  
With thee is joined my very heart  
Coupled in a common joy or smart.  
When I thy graceful form unsheathe  
A gentle tone it seems to breathe,  
Thy tongue tells not to me of war,  
But of some happier time by far.  
Though here below, it chimes above  
And lisps to me the note of love.”  
That final word when he outspake,  
He gave a leap and was awake  
Out of his panoramic dreamery,  
And now again the world could see  
Freed of all freaky fantasy.

Behold, it is familiar ground,  
He enters it right at a bound,  
Upon Sand Ridge he is now walking,  
And finds himself to Uncle Jimmy talking.  
Uncle Jimmy Short—’twas he  
Who gave to Lincoln that first steed,  
A mettled charger of Kentucky breed,  
A worthy mount to lead  
His horsed company.  
Lincoln let fall in dole his head  
As he to Uncle Jimmy said:  
“You see me come without your horse,

Though I myself be none the worse;  
Bay Speedwell always did his duty  
And did it too with dashing beauty,  
He drew the eye and won each heart  
The moment he would make a start.  
He to his rider was a glory  
And equalled any steed of story;  
And so that night it came about,  
Just after we were mustered out,  
Somebody stole him from my sleep,  
That loss still makes me weep.”  
Kind Jimmy comforted sad Abe  
Who oozed in tears just like a babe,  
Whereat the hearty farmer spake:  
“I have another steed which you can take  
And to New Salem ride today,  
Returning as you went away,  
Well mounted like a cavalier,  
Before the people to appear.  
For all the town is turning out  
To welcome you in one great shout  
The coming hero of the war,  
Of soldiering Sangamon the star.  
I know there will be an ovation  
As if we were the entire nation,  
Flocked to receive the President  
With artillery’s loud compliment;  
I too must rally with that throng,  
With Captain Lincoln ride along,  
And in his company shall muster  
Thus I may shine a little from his lustre.”

So Uncle Jimmy cheered the youth  
With the exaggerated truth,  
He knew it was without a doubt  
That all New Salem would march out  
Its Captain Abraham to greet,  
Would then escort him down the village  
street

To overlook idyllic Sangamon,  
The nymph he often thought upon  
The rushing days he had been gone.  
The trotters twain sped on the way,  
And soon the miles behind them lay;  
Yonder they come—a boisterous crowd  
Re-echoes its own huzzahs loud,  
It was the spot, it was the shout  
Which Lincoln left when he set out.  
Now three months gone or more,  
All seemed quite as it was before,  
E'en to the Hickory Hermitage  
Studded with shag-bark trees of every age.  
Lincoln around glanced his salute,  
While rattling guns began to shoot  
Their noisy words upon the air  
Well punctuated everywhere  
With many a piping boyish toot;  
And then a cannon boomed its greeting  
Of wavy sounds far down the vale retreating,  
Amid the clouds up in the sky  
Reverberations high went rolling by.

Many of Captain Lincoln's company  
Had come their chief again to see;  
They had been mustered out before,  
A month it was and even more,  
So that they were already back—  
Treading at home the beaten track.  
But Lincoln's duty would not let him quit,  
Than all the rest he showed more grit,  
As private afterwards he twice enlisted  
And in his troubrous task persisted—  
Methinks it was no wonder then—  
“You are the best of all us men”  
The soldiers shouted in a chorus:  
“Come take your place before us.”

Meanwhile the Captain looked around  
To spy whatever might be found,  
He oped his eyesight's keenest sense  
Scanning each corner of the fence,  
When at his side he felt a jog,  
'Twas Mentor Graham, the pedagogue,  
Ready a little speech to make  
All for the hero's sake.  
But he, the hero, had that moment seen  
The only one, the heroine—  
Schoolmaster had to stand aside,  
And some more talky time abide,  
For Lincoln reined his steed in sudden press  
Toward where stood both the Rutledges—  
The father and the daughter too—

That was just what he had to do.  
The flashing falchion out he drew,  
And waved it round above his head  
Until it seemed to cut the air in two:  
A maiden smiled upon the view,  
Wherewithal James Rutledge said:  
“Put up your sword, my valorous knight,  
Without reproach, without affright;  
Now let us march to the public square  
And hold our tournament of speeching  
there.”

So Lincoln sheathed again his blade  
And Uncle Jimmy with him stayed,  
The horsemen twain turned up the road,  
Before them first the fifer strode—  
It was the same old Thomas Cunes  
Playing the same old fifeing tunes  
Which he had fifeed for forty dozen moons,  
A single thing he had bran-new,  
It was the wooden pipe he whistled through,  
That former one, in his great zeal,  
He struck against a wagon wheel,  
Gesturing with it as he spoke,  
He thought to deal Black Hawk a stroke;  
But the old mouthpiece rolled away,  
Escaped destruction on that day;  
Through this lead spout he drives his breath  
Pumping as if for life and death;  
The big drum bellowing from its blows,

The snare-drum snarling through the nose,  
Are rhyming in a roaring rune  
Timed to the fifer's shrilly tune.  
Then through New Salem's single thorough-  
fare,  
All in procession to the Public Square,  
The townsmen march with jibe and jam  
Faming their hero Abraham;  
It was a pompous celebration  
As if they were just all creation.  
They halt before the Rutledge house,  
With cheers the sleepy bluffs arouse,  
Which talk with many an echo back  
Mocking New Salem's noisy pack.

## II.

But see! mounted again upon a cart  
Schoolmaster Mentor has made a start,  
Bids silence to that tonguey press  
And then the Captain doth address:  
“I gave you here a piece of work,  
Appointing you election clerk;  
I asked if you could write  
You said you could indite  
Some rabbit tracks upon a paper sheet  
And like a rabbit make them fleet.  
And so you wrote me all that day;  
The leisure you would fill with play,  
Telling the people many a story—  
That seemed to be your native territory;

Whatever it might be about  
The nub was certain to pop out.  
'Twas then I read your rising star  
To be the people's orator;  
Look! here again the flag I wave  
Which once I to your soldiers gave,  
Not now its folds flaunt forth defiant,  
But furled its lies a sleeping giant,  
Ready to wake at country's call,  
Whatever may befall;  
Aye, twinkling through this Black Hawk War  
Another destiny peeps from afar.  
But next the statesman's world you are to  
enter,  
Of which you will become the center;  
When strikes the moment critical,  
You rise o'er all the man political;  
Now we shall start this bud of Nature  
And send you to the Legislature."  
The crowd without dissenting stammer  
Sent cloudward up a mighty clamor;  
Approving what the speaker spoke,  
They clapped their heavy hands in hardy  
stroke.  
The soldier has become the candidate,  
And turns his way from war to state;  
He did not like the spirit military,  
To his whole character it ran contrary,  
E'en though he thought he had to fight,  
And could again perchance be forced to war

To prop with might the higher right,  
That uneclipsed shine still its star.

Dimly he now forefelt the goal  
Toward which his life must hence unroll;  
Again rose up that fleeing slave  
Whom he in agony must save;  
To that one act whate'er he may intend,  
His future pathway seems to bend;  
Though on the outside globe he start  
His thought would thither line as to its heart.  
Such were the throbings in his breast,  
He felt but little inner rest;  
And still the youth could hardly say  
The deepest thing that in him lay;  
That image might be an illusion  
Dancing amid his brain's confusion.  
But Lincoln had to do some speaking,  
Though not at present of his seeking;  
So with one will-bound look he rallied,  
And forth to words he boldly sallied:  
"What I have seen this little spell  
Would take me a long while to tell;  
Only a quarter of a year  
Has circled since I left you here,  
Yet I have lived an entire life  
Me seems, with all its stress and strife;  
The total future flowed through it  
Though of the present but a little bit;  
The dot of time indeed was small

Yet mirrored to me All-in-All,  
Should I hold out a thousand ages  
Their deeds were written on these few days'  
    pages,  
In mind I read that lightning script  
But all its words could not be lipped  
Though I might speak  
This entire week.  
And still there is one scene I heard  
Of which I might re-say the word;  
It was a cleaving fierce debate  
Preluding strains of war's estate  
Between the North and South;  
Though now the fight be only of the mouth,  
I fear it will not soon abate.  
Two young lieutenants had the wordy battle  
In which I heard the muskets rattle  
From the far-off upbearing years,  
With sorrow bursting into tears.  
But now the sword I shall unbuckle,  
Glad to be quit of fight;  
Still I to peace shall never truckle  
Or buy it with the loss of right.  
My heart swings in one strong vibration  
Unto the oneness of the Nation,  
Whose sections by our fathers mated  
Cannot again be separated;  
Within my deepest soul I bring  
This thought back from my soldiering:  
The Union of the States is King.”

Whereat again he bared the blade  
A South-east gesture too he made;  
He heard again the people's cry,  
Shouting to him like destiny:  
"Use it on him if there is need,  
We'll march along in God's speed."  
But with that one big gash upon the air,  
He scabbarded his sword in loving care,  
A look divine of sympathy  
He cast that selfsame way  
Where he had slashed through earth and sky  
Summoning all his skill to slay,  
As if the wound he made he sought to heal,  
While deeply his own blade he seemed to feel,  
His cut came back into his heart again,  
He gave the blow, but felt the more the pain.  
He took the trappings of the sword  
Which was now in its scabbard stored  
And held it forth unto the crowd  
While to himself he spake out loud:  
"I never drew a drop of blood  
With this keen weapon's furious slash,  
Though I at times quite ready stood  
In the last need to give a gash.  
I pulled it once in crisis grave,  
An Indian not to slay but save,  
Although I went to fight against his kin  
My first act was to aid a coppered skin;  
And then I helped with it a fleeing slave  
To keep that liberty

Which you and I possess as free—  
Wherein I traced this easy sequel,  
That all men are born equal.  
That weirdly winning word  
I always read upon this sword,  
Until it came to be my creed  
Which had to rise into my deed.”

The crowd was silent at this speech,  
They hardly felt its vast outreach,  
No murmuring of praise or blame,  
Perchance a balancing between the same,  
A something seemed what is to be  
Wrapped in the robe of far futurity.  
Just then Ann Rutledge, fairest of the land,  
Trips up with roses nodding in her hand,  
And on his blouse she pins their blushes,  
While in her cheeks responsive rise the  
flushes;  
The maid herself, the soulful flower,  
Has reached her richest tint that hour;  
In every eye her bloom supreme  
Rayed out heart’s tenderness agleam;  
The multitude, as from above,  
Were melted to the thrill of love,  
And as one common soul they prayed  
At the divine appearance of the maid,  
As if a Goddess she had just come down  
Revealing Heaven’s beauty to the town.  
But in one look was Lincoln recognized  
More than all other praise ‘twas by him  
prized;

Taller he seemed, on high uprisen,  
The world no longer was his prison,  
In dreams a while he stood distraught,  
But soon again himself upcaught,  
And to the maid the sword he caught.  
She touched it with a pleasant smile,  
Her father stepped up to the front meanwhile  
And stately there to Lincoln spake  
Before that little human lake  
Of faces rippling from the pair  
As the one center there.

“This sword ancestral with new story  
I shall take back in its old glory;  
A fresher lustre now it shows,  
And brighter in its honor grows;  
Though hang it on its peg I must  
Methinks it was not made to rust,  
Time will not let it wear a stain,  
For I shall have to take it down again;  
If any other foe appear,  
Lincoln, you shall find it here,  
Sword of the knightly Rutledges,  
Which has the priestly power to bless  
Its wearer in all strife and stress;  
And as I take it in my hand  
It gleams the oneness of our land,  
And glowers wrath at separation  
Which darkly overhangs our nation;  
’Twill never let that be the fact

With Lincoln wielding it in act.  
Thus now I emphasize my word:  
My daughter here shall thee engird  
Again with this same flashing brand  
Which hews its way in valor's hand.”  
Ann Rutledge gave a blooming smile,  
Yet stood and thought a little while,  
As if she peered across the future's gap,  
And glimpsed in hope some far-off hap  
Which Lincoln too somehow involved—  
The riddle lay within her soul unsolved.

But Lincoln wore a sober look,  
Solemn the train of speech he took:  
“Peace, peace! I lip the word in love,  
Most precious present from above;  
I hope of God that war be not,  
Methinks there is but one worse lot—  
That is, to let the nation  
Die under doom of peaceful separation.  
I shall enlist again, so come the need;  
My people, are you all agreed?  
My soldiers, daring battle's harms  
Will you with me re-shoulder arms?  
To march perchance the other way—  
Which God forbid, I pray.”  
Whereat uprose a solid shout,  
“You, leader, Lincoln, march us out.”  
Then Lincoln fixed afar his eyes  
As if he would soliloquize:

“The Union is our Holy Mother,  
And Illinois her son,  
Than her we recognize none other,  
Though we be only one,  
Of her increasing family  
With more than royal pedigree.  
Not all the States such high descent can show  
But for their birth-line elsewhere go,  
Even across the sea  
Roots their colonial tree.  
This Mother, too, us free has borne  
Our soil will chain no slave forlorn;  
I would that each State thus might be—  
That day I hope I yet may see.”

Whereat a silence fell upon the crowd,  
They all were set to thinking not aloud,  
And could not well make up their mind,  
And so they had to lag behind  
Their speaker in his lofty mood,  
Who hazily before them stood.  
It was a dreamy interval  
Which stilled the talking of them all,  
A node of strange bewilderment.  
Each seemed upon himself intent,  
That wordlessness was a surprise;  
What could those tongues so paralyze?  
Lincoln dreamed trouble out of his eyes,  
The heart must find some utterance,  
It cannot bide in speechless trance,

Then just in time the man appears,  
Jack Kelso, who can tap the unshed tears.  
He seems himself to throb the woe,  
And so he starts the tale of Romeo.  
The tragic lot of Juliet,  
Who paid of too much love the debt  
With her own life laid in the tomb,  
Turned every heart to sob and gloom,  
Making them feel fair maiden Ann  
Caught in the net of fateful plan,  
For she was their first favorite  
Who stood just now within their sight.  
But Lincoln more than all forefelt  
The stroke of destiny here dealt  
Upon a hopeful loving pair;  
One sigh escaped him like despair,  
As if it came just from the fact  
Which he saw scythed Time enact  
Upon the fairest of the fair.  
Again he grasped the weapon by the belt,  
With it he might not yet be through—  
Lincoln perchance is fated too.  
A while his very heart did melt,  
And pulse its way out of his eyes  
At love's untoward destinies,  
So deeply Kelso him upstirred  
By Shakespeare's ever-throbbing word.

But there the bright Ann Rutledge stands  
Before him reaching both her hands,

As if to help him out the cloud  
Which seems him bodeful to enshroud,  
And takes the sword from Lincoln now  
Who faithful had fulfilled his vow,  
Uttered upon that very spot,  
To bear the blade without a blot.  
His melancholy took to flight,  
And all the dragons of his spirit's night,  
Were routed by the inner sun  
Which with the maiden rose and shone.  
Thus Lincoln was to hope restored  
When out his hand he gave the sword,  
Sword of the loyal Rutledges  
Yet worn with knightly gentleness,  
Which spake a line of high degree  
Flashing the words: "Man is born free."  
The father also nearby stood,  
James Rutledge, worthy of his blood,  
But worthier in his own right  
Of character and honor bright;  
The people's word gave him a crown  
As the first man of all the town;  
The cavalier aloft did tower  
Beside him bloomed the rarest flower,  
He looked to Lincoln high and spoke,  
In presence of the cheering folk:  
"Son of promise, you I nominate  
Here as our legislative candidate,  
Our choice you are the law to make,  
In that I see your future stake,

The larger time is coming on—  
A mightier stream than Sangamon  
Which yonder now can barely crawl  
Through shallow pools and grasses tall,  
A little harmless thing,  
Much dwindled since the floods of spring,  
When you obeyed your country's call;  
Then it appeared as if forever  
It might roll on a full-grown river,  
Able upon its face to float  
The heavy-burdened steam-winged boat.  
Not for New Salem's likes alone  
With its dear navigable Sangamon,  
But for the weal of the entire State  
It must be yours to legislate;  
Then you will mount to a still higher station,  
From State rise up to the whole Nation.”

Whereat they cheered the candidate  
With an all-throated tumbling yell,  
Whose ups and downs surged for a spell;  
Lincoln has passed to his new vocation,  
Whose star will never quit his sight  
Until his eye shuts into his last night;  
But now he hails the great release  
To turn away from war to peace;  
Though he forefeel this may not be the last—  
Enough! the Black Hawk War is past.  
So Lincoln has his campaign rounded,  
Some depths of living he has sounded,

And now again has reached the place  
From which he started on his race,  
Still the aspiring candidate  
For his dear folk to legislate.  
Another yet, though voiceless, goal  
Looms up within him and above—  
A power he cannot control—  
He is, too, candidate for love.  
A circle going forth and coming back,  
The tale has followed out his journey's track;  
But now the end of this one inning  
Has overlapped a new beginning,  
Whereof to tell is not of here  
But cycles in another sphere.

## Historic Intimations.

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CANTO I—On April 21st, 1832, sixty-eight men volunteered to serve the State of Illinois at Richland, Sangamon County, and in the election which followed Lincoln was chosen Captain, who had walked over from New Salem to the place of rendezvous. This was in response to the call of Governor Reynolds for troops against the invasion of Black Hawk.

Says Stevens (*The Black Hawk War*, p. 278): “One William Kirkpatrick aspired to the same position. He was pretentious, assumed a prominence in the neighborhood—and when he announced a desire for the office he expected to get it. The two candidates were placed a short distance away, and the men were requested to fall in behind the man they preferred for their Captain. Lincoln was overwhelmingly and hilariously elected.”

Says Miss Tarbell (*Life of Lincoln*, Vol. I., p. 75): “One of the odd jobs which Lincoln had taken since coming into Illinois, was working in a saw-mill for a man named Kirkpatrick” (to which fact a story is appended).

The muster-roll of the company in Lincoln's hand-writing is still in existence. A fac-simile is given in Steven's work before mentioned. No. 20 is the name William Kirkpatrick, with the inserted gloss: "Promoted from the ranks April 30th."

From Lincoln's first brief sketch of his life (written in 1859): "Then came the Black Hawk War, and I was elected Captain of volunteers—a success which gave me more pleasure than any I have had since."

From a second and later account (written by him in 1860): "Abraham joined a volunteer company and to his own surprise was elected Captain of it. He says he has not since had any success in life which gave him so much satisfaction. He went to the campaign, served near three months, met the ordinary hardships of such an expedition, but was in no battle (Works of Lincoln, by Nicolay & Hay).

"Lincoln's paternal grandfather, also called Abraham Lincoln, the pioneer from Virginia, met his death within two years after his settlement in Kentucky at the hands of the Indians—not in battle but by stealth when he was laboring to open a farm in the forest" (From Herndon & Weik's Lincoln, p. 6).

Herndon says: "I have often heard the President describe the tragedy as he had in-

herited the story from his father, Thomas Lincoln, whose brother, Mordecai, took deliberate aim at a silver crescent which hung suspended from the Indian's breast and brought him to the ground. The tragic death of his father filled Mordecai with an intense hatred of the Indians, a feeling from which he never recovered. It was ever with him like an avenging spirit. Thomas Lincoln retained a vivid recollection of his father's death, which he was fond of relating to his children, among whom was, of course, young Abraham."

CANTO II—Black Hawk left an autobiography, the only Indian one, it is said. It was dictated in 1833 to Antoine Le Claire, a half-breed interpreter who could not write. The amanuensis was a Mr. Patterson, who gave to it its style and who printed it.

Black Hawk was born in 1767 at Saukenuk, the Sauk village on the Rock River, not far from the latter's confluence with the Mississippi. He was not the Chief of Sauks and Foxes, but the leader of the British band, those Indians of his nation who favored the British against the Americans. His successful rival for chieftainship was Keokuk, quite his counterpart in character.

Opinions about the ability of Black Hawk are diverse. He has been often regarded as one of the great historic Indians, and put in

company with Philip, Pontiac, Tecumseh. Says one of his historians: "He evinced no particular talents in any of his plans, nor did he exhibit extraordinary skill in their accomplishment." He was a daring fighter but no great organizer of his race.

White Cloud was the Prophet, a Winnebago, whose visions are said to have had their part in stirring up Black Hawk to the war. His village was known as Prophetstown and was burned by the volunteers.

CANTO III—The town of New Salem, the scene of Lincoln's early activity, has vanished. It was situated on a bluff of the Sangamon river which was then regarded as navigable. The place was founded in 1829 by James Rutledge and John Cameron, and lasted about ten years. At present it is a cow pasture.

Rutledge was born in South Carolina and belonged to the famous family of that name. He first migrated to Kentucky and thence to Illinois. Says Herndon: "I knew him as early as 1833, and have often shared the hospitality of his home. He was a man of no little force of character; those who knew him best, loved him the most. Ann, his third child, was a beautiful girl, and by her winning ways attached people to her so firmly that she soon became the most popular young

lady of the village" (Herndon and Weick's *Lincoln*, p. 120).

Mentor Graham, the village schoolmaster of New Salem, was a character who in a number of ways plays into the early life of Lincoln. Some account of him may be found in the Lincoln Biographies.

Uncle Jimmy Short of Sand Ridge was the generous farmer who redeemed Lincoln's horse and surveying instruments when they were sold for debt (see Miss Tarbell's *Lincoln*, p. 105).

Sallie Bush Lincoln, the stepmother, had probably more to do in building the character of Abraham Lincoln than any other human being. The following citation indicating her sympathetic and premonitory nature we owe to Herndon: "I did not want Abe to run for President and did not want to see him elected. I was afraid that something would happen to him. And when he came down to see me after he was elected President, I still felt and my heart told me that something would befall him, and that I should never see him again."

Jack Kelso: "In New Salem was one of those curious individuals sometimes found in frontier settlements, half poet, half loafer, incapable of earning a living in any steady employment, yet familiar with good literature and capable of enjoying it—Jack Kelso. He

repeated Shakespeare and Burns incessantly over the odd jobs he undertook, or as he idled by the streams—for he was a famous fisherman—and Lincoln soon became his constant companion" (Miss Tarbell's *Lincoln* I., p. 93).

CANTO IV—There is a general agreement concerning the talents and character of Keokuk, "the watchful Fox." He was a Sauk, born about 1780, the life-long rival of Black Hawk for the headship of their common nation.

Says Drake's Life of Black Hawk (7th edition, 1849): "The eloquence of Keokuk and his sagacity in the civil affairs of his nation are, like his military talents, of a high order. In point of intellect, integrity of character, and the capacity for governing others, he is supposed to have no superior among the Indians."

On the other hand, Keokuk had a decided Epicurean tendency. He was fond of fire-water, and indulged in the luxury of six wives. "He liked to travel in state from tribe to tribe. He moved in more savage magnificence, it is supposed, than any other Indian chief on the continent" (Drake's Life, very partial to Black Hawk).

Says Stevens (*The Black Hawk War*, Chicago, 1903—a book unfriendly to Black

Hawk): “Keokuk’s oratory was so perfect, his logic so convincing, his person so magnetic, and his pleas so engaging that poor Black Hawk made a sorry figure against him. As an orator Keokuk had no equal among the red men, and the influence it acquired for him so rankled in the heart of Black Hawk that the latter could never overcome his hatred of Keokuk” (p. 44).

The fact is, the two Indians were opposite in moral temperament. In contrast with Keokuk’s Epicureanism, stands out prominently Black Hawk’s Stoicism. In his Auto-biography Black Hawk condemns fire-water as “bad medicine”; he also claims to have had but one wife; moreover, like a good moralist, he sneers at Keokuk as “politic.” On the whole, the pictures of Black Hawk (see them in Stevens) show an ascetic, thin-visaged, Puritanic look.

There is, however, some evidence that he too at times indulged in fire-water and polygamy, like a true Indian (and some white men). This evidence can be found in his friendly biographer, Drake.

But the pivotal point in the character of Black Hawk is contained in the following statement by him, which may indeed be said to express the basic consciousness of the Indian race: “My reason teaches me that land

cannot be sold. The Great Spirit gave it to his children to live upon, and cultivate, as far as is necessary, for their subsistence; and so long as they occupy and cultivate it, they have the right to the soil, but if they voluntarily leave it, then any other people have the right to settle upon it. Nothing can be sold but such things as can be carried away."

Possibly we may account in part for Keokuk by the fact that he had white (French) blood in his veins, through his mother. The Sauks originally were located in Canada upon the St. Lawrence. Thence occurred their migration westward to the Great Lakes, toward the end of the 17th century; next they are found at Green Bay, where their federation with Foxes took place. From Wisconsin they moved southward, dispossessing and destroying other Indians till they reach Rock river, where they are overtaken by the white American migration and pushed across the Mississippi.

CANTO V—The interference of Lincoln to protect an old stray Indian, who had wandered into the camp of the regiment, is given with some variations by the biographers. We shall cite from the account of Herndon, who probably heard about the incident from the lips of Lincoln himself as well as from soldiers of the Black Hawk War (I., p. 87):

“An old Indian strayed, hungry and helpless, into camp one day, whom the soldiers were conspiring to kill on the ground that he was a spy. A letter from General Cass, recommending him for his past kind and faithful services to the whites, which the trembling old savage drew from beneath the folds of his blanket, failed in any degree to appease the wrath of the men who confronted him. They had come out to fight the treacherous Indians, and here was one who had the temerity even to steal into their camp. ‘Make an example of him,’ they exclaimed, ‘the letter is a forgery and he is a spy.’ But the tall form of their Captain interposed itself between them and their defenseless victim. Lincoln’s determined look and the demand that it must not be done, were enough. They suddenly desisted, and the Indian, unmolested, continued on his way.”

CANTO VI—In May, 1816, United States troops landed on Rock Island and began to build Fort Armstrong, named after the late Secretary of War. The purpose of the fort was to overawe the hostile Indians of the adjacent country, of whom the leading spirit was Black Hawk. Moreover, the Island was a kind of holy spot for the Indians, with whose mythology it was connected. This is indicated by a passage in Black Hawk’s Auto-biography as follows:

“A good spirit had care of this island who lived in a cave in the rocks immediately under the place where the fort now stands, and has often been seen by our people. He was white with large wings like a swan’s, but ten times larger. We were particular not to make much noise in that part of the island which he inhabited, for fear of disturbing him. But the noise of the fort has since driven him away, and no doubt a bad spirit has taken his place.”

CANTO VII—From Lincoln’s speech before the Convention which nominated him for Senator against Douglas (June 16th, 1858):

“In my opinion it (slavery agitation) will not cease till a crisis shall have been reached and passed. A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this Government cannot endure permanently half-slave, half-free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved, I do not expect the House to fall, but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other.”

From the life of Jefferson Davis by his wife (I., p. 132): “Then a tall, gawky, slab-sided, homely, young man, dressed in a suit of bluejeans, presented himself as the captain of a company of recruits, and was sworn in by Jefferson Davis.” This statement doubtless is derived from the words of her

husband. Lincoln also believed that he had been sworn in by Jefferson Davis, and repeated the fact to Ben Perley Poore and others. Still the statement has been questioned, sometimes on one ground and sometimes on another.

From the same biography of Davis we learn that his views on State sovereignty were fixed already in 1832, which year was full of the nullification excitement, the Force Bill, and Jackson's campaign for re-election. The thought that Davis's regiment might be sent by Jackson against the nullifiers, had already been weighed by the young Lieutenant with this result, according to his wife's record: He resolved to resign his commission in the army, though by education, association and preference he was a soldier, rather than be a party to the coercion of a State. Thus Davis must have been thinking amid the Black Hawk War.

In 1835 Davis resigned and married Miss Taylor, daughter of the General, having retired to his plantation in Mississippi. The young wife died the same year.

In the Black Hawk War Lieut. Albert Sidney Johnston was on Gen. Atkinson's staff. Lieut. Robert Anderson was "Assistant Inspector General of the militia with the rank of Colonel on the Governor's staff." Lieut. Davis was for a time Adjutant to Taylor.

CANTO VIII—From a local history (Lee County) has been transmitted the following speech of Taylor to some mutinous State troops: "You are citizen soldiers and some of you may fill high offices, or even be Presidents some day—but never unless you do your duty." The fact is three future Presidents were then in the neighborhood, possibly within the hearing of his voice. "Every American citizen has in him the total gamut of possibilities between the Gallows and the Presidency," said the observant politician upon a time.

Accounts agree about Keokuk's treatment of Black Hawk after the latter's defeat. (See Drake's Life of Black Hawk, p. 218). Keokuk with some followers came up the river to see Black Hawk, who was a prisoner at Fort Armstrong: "Keokuk kindly extended his hand to Black Hawk, saying: The Great Spirit has sent our brother back, let us shake hands with him in friendship." Still Black Hawk flared up seriously once, and Keokuk had to apologize for him, and to intercede with the military authorities for his liberation. The outcome was that Black Hawk was allowed to return to home and family. He quietly settled down, and for a time took up his abode near Keokuk's village on the Iowa River. But he could never get over his hate and jealousy of his rival. On an im-

portant public occasion he said: "Keokuk has been the cause of my present situation, but do not attach blame to him." This was spoken not long before his death, which occurred October 3rd, 1838.

CANTO IX—It is recorded that "the company of Captain Iles was mustered out by Lieutenant Robert Anderson at Fort Wilburn," south-east of Dixon's Ferry on the Illinois, an important depot of supplies (Captain Iles' *Life and Times*, by himself, 1883). Lincoln was then re-mustered into the new company of Capt. Early, with whom he made the circle to Lake Koshkonong and back again to Dixon's Ferry. The expedition to Galena and return took place with Capt. Iles.

Stillman's defeat (May 14th) was merely a panic on the part of a battalion of white volunteers, 275 in number, who fled disgracefully from a few Indians. But it prolonged the war, encouraged the Reds, and frightened the border to a frenzy, sending indeed a thrill of alarm through the whole Union. Moreover, it was the exploit which gave to Black Hawk his chief fame as a great Indian commander. The Governor of the State issued a new call for troops. The Secretary of War sent 1,000 United States soldiers from the Seaboard, and General Scott was or-

dered to the North-west to take charge. (Drake, p. 156). Lincoln's company was not with Stillman, but hastened to the field of battle the next day—May 15th—and helped bury the dead (Steveus, p. 284). Of the three enlistments of Lincoln, the first has been already recorded; the second was when he enlisted as a private with Captain Iles for twenty days, having been mustered out as captain the 27th of May; on June 15th he was mustered out the second time, and re-enlisted with Captain Early. After another round of considerable extent, he was mustered out for the last time July 10th, 1832, and started for home, the most of his original company having already gone before him.

